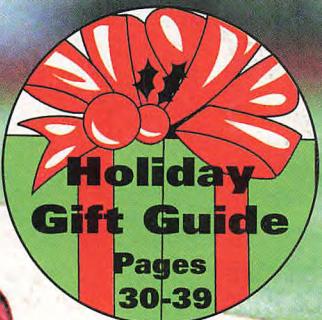


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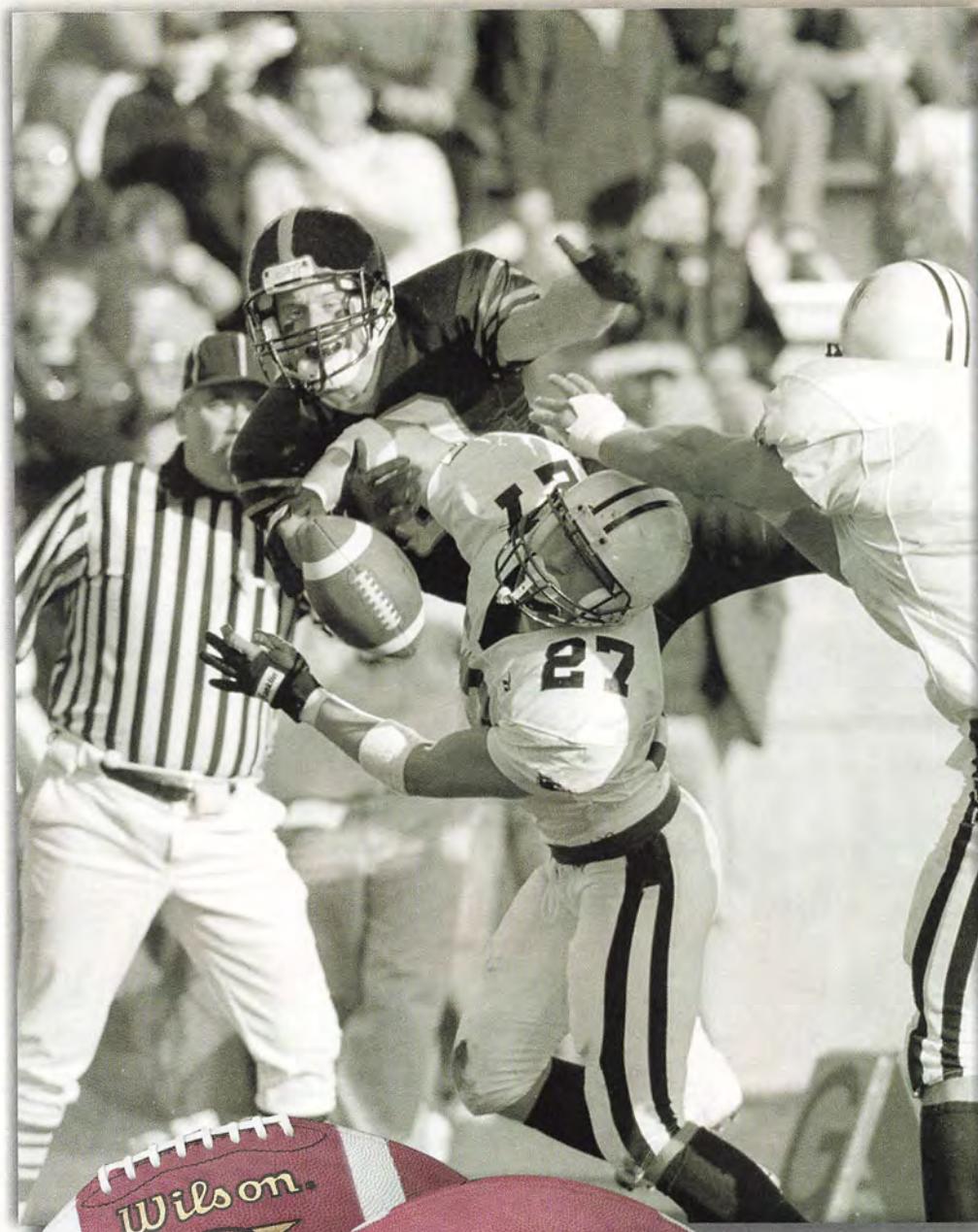


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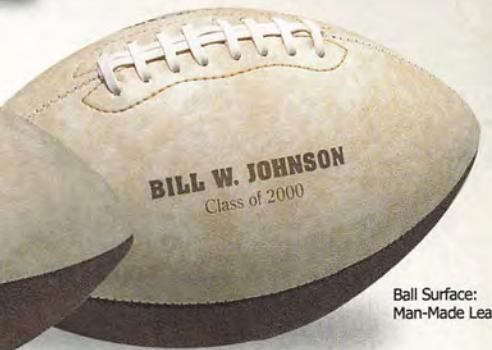
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Could It Be Magic?

Sooners lucky and good in derailing top-ranked Huskers



**Brian
HILL**

CATCHING A TIPPED pass while on the ground could be a sign of magic in the air.

Although Andre Woolfolk's second-quarter reception while on the Owen Field turf wasn't as dramatic as Matt Davison's game-saving scoop in 1997, it may have been an indication of something special happening in Norman, Okla., this fall.

Woolfolk's grab of a 34-yard Josh Heupel pass, that had been tipped by a Husker defender, set up the game-tying touchdown, three plays later. On third-and 14, Heupel backed away from an all-out blitz and lofted another 34-yard strike to Curtis Fagan.

Just like that, the Huskers' 14-0 lead had been erased. Just as quickly as it started, the Nebraska offense had ground to a halt, and Oklahoma was in the midst of a 24-point second quarter that would prove to be too much to overcome.

After opening the game with impressive drives of 74 and 91 yards, Nebraska would produce just two more first downs the rest of the first half. After rushing for 105 yards on those two drives, the Huskers would rush for just 90 more the rest of the game.

Puzzling? Yes. More like mind-boggling.

Was it a case of overconfidence, with a two-touchdown lead less than seven minutes into the game? Maybe.

It was suggested on a television

postgame show that perhaps Nebraska abandoned its running game too soon.

The Huskers, who averaged 61 rushing plays during the first seven games, ran the ball 43 times against the Sooners. Take away a 43-yard burst by fullback Willie Miller and a 37-yard touchdown run by quarterback Eric Crouch, and the remaining 41 rushes produced 115 yards.

Oklahoma deserves a lot of the credit. The Sooners were apparently able to make adjustments on the fly that shut down a high-powered Husker offense, which had averaged 49.6 points in its last five games.

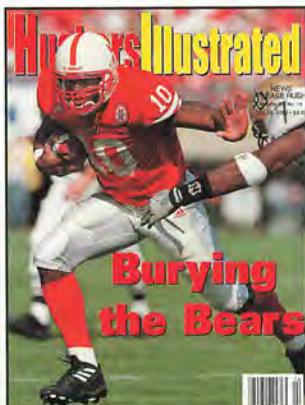
"If you can stop us from executing, then you've done your job," Crouch said in a postgame interview. "And they did that more times than not today."

The Nebraska defense, which has taken its share of heat this year, actually played well, except for the second quarter. The Blackshirts held OU to a field goal after a blocked punt deep in Husker territory, and the only score of the second half came on an interception return.

You can read much, much more about the Nebraska-Oklahoma game inside this edition. You'll also find a special look at the NU I-backs and a profile of tight end Tracey Wistrom.

Don't give up on this season. With Kansas State losing for the second time, the Huskers' chances still look good for making it to Kansas City for the Big 12 Championship game.

And they just might get back into the national championship picture, if a couple of bounces go their way. ■



ON THE COVER

Quarterback Eric Crouch is tackled by Oklahoma's Michael Thompson, after an 18-yard run in the third quarter. Crouch was slightly injured on the play. Photo by Scott Bruhn

VOLUME 20, NUMBER 15
ISSUE 0014

Huskers Illustrated

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G Associates Inc.

Huskers Illustrated (ISSN 0279-3474) is published monthly January through May and August, bi-monthly June/July and weekly September through mid-December except open dates. Single issue cost \$2.95 (yearbook \$7.95); subscription rate for one year (18 issues) is \$46.95. First Class postage is available for an additional charge of \$18.00 per year. Foreign postage \$34.00.

Huskers Illustrated is published by Landmark Publications, Inc., 601 Taylorsville Road, Shelbyville, Ky., 40065, (502) 633-4334. Periodicals postage paid at Shelbyville, Ky., and additional mailing offices.

Postmaster: Send address changes to *Huskers Illustrated*, P.O. Box 83222, Lincoln, Neb. 68501-3222.

Address all editorial-related correspondence to *Huskers Illustrated*, 3210 NW 3rd St., Lincoln, Neb. 68521.

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I-800-524-9527

Monday - Friday: 8 a.m. - 5 p.m.
(Central Time)

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<http://www.huskersillustrated.com>

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Huskers Illustrated

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Correll Buckhalter says he's comfortable with his role as an alternate. *By Mike Babcock*

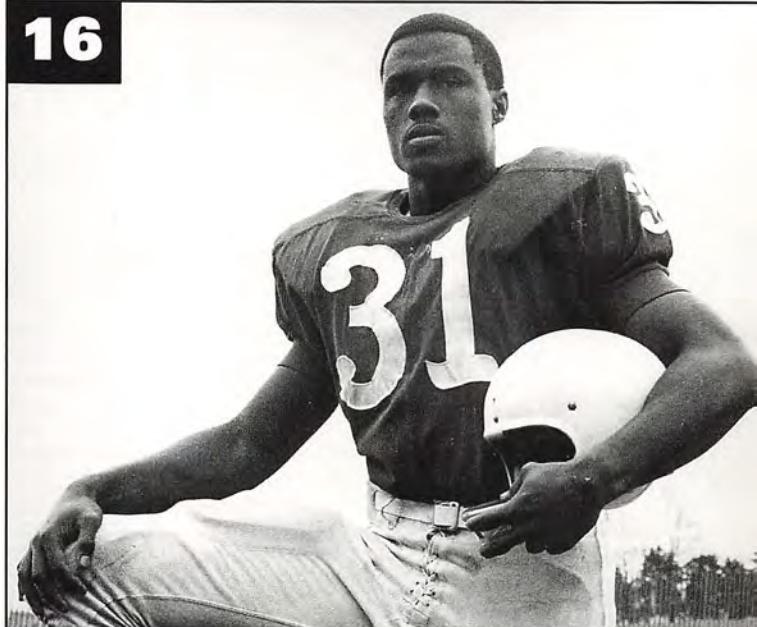
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Polk Fits Mold

Dick Butkus finished his playing career four years before Carlos Polk was born. But Nebraska's middle linebacker has watched the Hall of Fame middle linebacker on film.

"My dad used to make me watch that stuff," Polk said recently. "At first, he used to make me watch. But I catch myself now going through the stations and seeing old classic games, watching it."

Butkus, who played nine seasons with the NFL's Chicago Bears after earning All-America honors at Illinois, set the standard for middle linebackers, as far as Polk is concerned.

"Those were the tough men," said Polk. "You go out there with the little helmet, with the little line in front of it that won't protect anything . . . that was like a hockey game then."

The "little line" was a reference to the single-bar facemasks common in the 1960s.

"Back in those days, they played football. I think nowadays we play football, and I mean, we try to take it back to that. But those were the times where football was really played."

Polk's throwback attitude toward the game, as well as his proficiency at it, has earned him a place among 11 semi-finalists for the Butkus Award, which has been presented annually to the nation's best collegiate linebacker by the Downtown Athletic Club of Orlando (Fla.) since 1985.

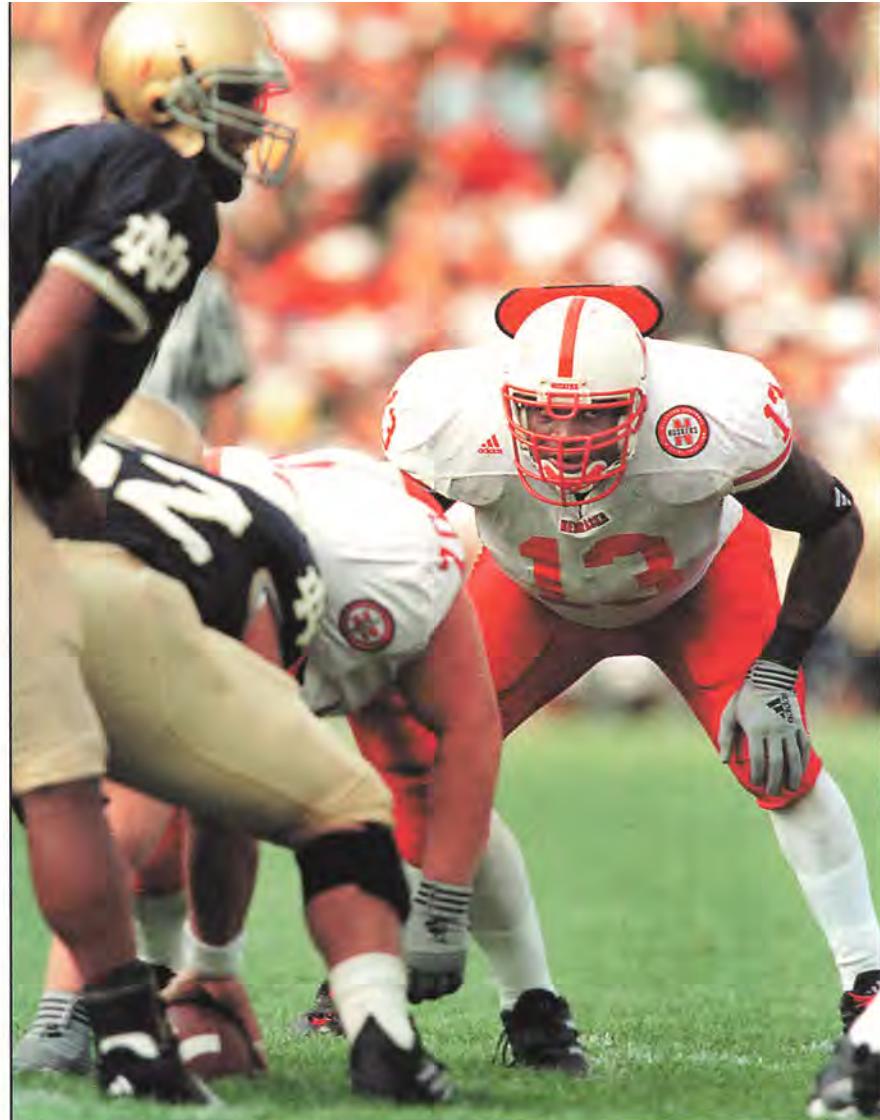
The original Butkus Award watch list, announced in late August, included 71 names.

A 28-member voting panel will narrow the list to three on Nov. 9, with the award being presented to the winner on Dec. 8. The presentation will be televised by Fox Sports Net.

"It makes me feel great," Polk said of his inclusion among the semi-finalists.

"But I know I have a lot of people to thank for it, my defensive linemen (for) keeping guys off me to make plays and my coaches for putting me in position to make plays."

Polk, a senior from Rockford, Ill., has



Carlos Polk had 12 tackles in the Notre Dame game this season.

been Nebraska's leading tackler this season.

"I think he's very deserving," said Coach Frank Solich. "He's really been the spearhead, he and Kyle (Vanden Bosch), of a defense that's somewhat inexperienced at a lot of positions."

"I think not only has he played well this year, but he's brought those young linebackers around. He's also an excellent leader, and so when you look at it from that standpoint, I think he's done everything that he can to make this a great year for himself."

The other semi-finalists are: Florida State's Brian Allen and Tommy Polley, Clemson's Keith Adams, Arizona State's Adam Archulata, Oklahoma's Rocky Calmus, Miami's Dan Morgan, Oregon's Matt Smith, Virginia Tech's Ben Taylor, UCLA's Robert Thomas and Tennessee's Eric Westmoreland.

Allen, Polley and Morgan also were semi-finalists last season, when LaVar Arrington became the first player from Penn State — known as "linebacker university" — to win the award.

Nebraska's Trev Alberts won the award in 1993. The Cornhuskers' Ed Stewart finished third in 1994, and Broderick Thomas finished second to Alabama's Derrick Thomas in 1988.

The 6-foot-2, 250-pound Polk fits the Butkus mold, according to Solich.

"I do not know Dick Butkus personally," Solich said. "But I know that Dick Butkus was a great football player. I've watched him play. I know that Carlos is a great football player."

"I know that Dick Butkus had great toughness. I know that Carlos does. I know that Dick Butkus was able to make plays all over the field. Carlos is able to do that. I know that Dick Butkus made his teammates better. And I know that Carlos has done that."

Butkus, who now is involved in the World Wrestling Federation's XFL, was an actor following his NFL career. And "Carlos does a great job of acting, let me tell you," Solich said with a laugh.

"He's about as good as they get. He does make things fun. He's very serious about playing great football and very serious about his teammates playing great football. But yet, he finds a way to make things fun during practice. He's just one of those guys that is very witty and you can have fun with."

Acting, however, is not an area in which Polk hopes to emulate Butkus. "I was thinking about trying to be a singer," Polk said. "But I don't think that's going to take me too far." ■

PROMOTING CROUCH

The Heisman Trophy committee notified Nebraska in mid-October that it might have to arrange for Eric Crouch to travel to New York City for the trophy presentation on Dec. 9.

The committee invites the top finishers to the Downtown Athletic Club for the nationally televised ceremony and because there is no list of nominees, it must speculate on which players are likely to receive the most votes. A decision on those who will be invited will be made later in the season.

Crouch is deserving of Heisman consideration, according to Solich.

"I don't think there's any question that if you followed us, you would put him in the elite category of those guys you're looking at for All-America honors and those guys you're looking at for Heisman honors or whatever honors are out there," said Solich. "He should be very big into those."

"Anybody that's had the opportunity to watch us play knows what he's meant to our offense."

At a recent Tuesday news conference, a television reporter suggested Crouch should be nicknamed "Kid Heisman." The junior from Omaha seemed taken aback by the nickname.

"I'm not sure I'd get used to it," he said.

SIXTH STARTER

The Cornhuskers' Jon Rutherford is a back-up offensive lineman. "I'm not a starter," said the junior from Midwest City, Okla. "But I have a role that allows me to get a lot of snaps."

He has played tackle, guard and center this season and is regarded by offensive line coaches Milt Tenopir and Dan Young as a starter, the way Matt Hoskinson was for the 1997 team.

"All I do is, whenever they want me in, they'll put me in," said Rutherford, who had never played center until this season. "I just go hard, like I am starting. It shouldn't matter if you're starting or not. You should give 100 percent no matter what. So that's what I try to do."

Learning to play center was difficult, even though "I kind of knew what the center was doing," Rutherford said. "If you play guard, you know what the other guy's doing. But just getting the snaps down, the quarterbacks had to be patient with me at the beginning."

"Some of the snaps, I started running before I got the ball up and it wouldn't get there. So that's probably the biggest thing I had to work on, that and the footwork." ■



Jon Rutherford

Quick Hits

What's Happening In Nebraska Athletics?

DEFENSIVE MATURITY

Inexperience or lack of maturity has hampered Nebraska's defense at times this season. No one has questioned that. But how exactly does immaturity affect a player?

"If you're an outside rusher, after a while you're seasoned enough to recognize, 'I'm supposed to be an outside contain rusher but the guy's not going to break containment; when do I have enough confidence in my ability to come underneath and go make a play?'" said defensive coordinator Craig Bohl.

"So that's the balance you have as a player. You don't want those guys out there being robots. But a younger player, he's going to do what the coach says. Well, when can I become a player and feel like I can have the confidence and the aggressiveness to go ahead and make those decisions?"

FOOTBALL FISTICUFFS

Former Nebraska Outland Trophy winner Zach Wiegert, who now plays in the Jacksonville Jaguars' offensive line, and Baltimore Ravens linebacker Peter Boulware were ejected for fighting late in the fourth quarter of the Ravens' 15-10 victory at Jacksonville in early October.

"You've got to do that every once in a while," Cornhusker offensive guard Russ Hochstein said in response to a question during a Tuesday news conference. "It goes with the territory. It's a pretty physical sport. I'm sure tempers flare up every once in a while and a guy has to protect himself."

"But they don't teach it here. That's stuff you bring from home or wherever you grew up. I don't take boxing lessons. Maybe I should take them some time; I don't know."

GOOD LORD

Eric Crouch assessed the play of his back-up positively after the Baylor game.

"He's a young quarterback, but he plays like he's a veteran," he said of Jammal Lord. "He does so many good things out there. He's a smart guy and he's agile. He's a big strong kid. I can't say enough good things about him. He did another great job out there."

WELL-COACHED

Iowa State recovered an onside kick on the opening kickoff against Nebraska. But the Cyclones shouldn't have taken the Cornhuskers' kick return team by surprise.

"We had talked really all week about watching for special things in the kicking game, fake punts, fake field goals, fake extra points and onside kicks," Coach Frank Solich said. "We talked to them a little bit just prior to going on the field about watching for the onside kick. And they did just that; they watched it."

"I guess they're just well-coached. They did what we told them. They watched it."

OOPS, DEFINITELY NOT WYLIE

The Oct. 14 issue of Huskers Illustrated misidentified the Oklahoma player that Joe Blahak allegedly clipped on Johnny Rodgers' dramatic punt return for the first touchdown in the 1971 "Game of the Century." The story says Blahak did, or didn't, clip the Sooners' Joe Wylie.

In fact, the player was Jon Harrison. Wylie punted the ball.

So Blahak definitely did not clip Wylie. And officially, he didn't clip Harrison either.

FOOTBALL FAN, TOO

Women's basketball Coach Paul Sanderford began a preseason news conference with, "I really think our defense is improving. We're getting to the quarterback . . ."

He smiled. "Naw, I'm just kidding," he said.

Sanderford sprinkles humor throughout interviews. Referring to his team's youth, he said he and his assistants have done nearly everything, but "we haven't changed diapers yet." ■

He Wasn't Invincible

Neck injury forces Uhlir to give up football, but he still contributes as undergraduate assistant



Mike Babcock

TYRONE UHLIR WAS home alone when the emotion finally spilled over.

"I started crying," he said, recalling that day in late-April.

The former Nebraska fullback wasn't embarrassed to admit the tears.

"It finally sank in that I'd never play again," he said. "I cried."

Uhlir had watched the spring intrasquad game from the sideline in street clothes just a few days earlier, not knowing that his Cornhusker career was finished.

On the Monday before the spring game, his body had gone numb during practice, and for the rest of that week he had difficulty just holding his neck up while he sat in classes.

He had been bothered by neck "stingers" since his first year at Nebraska in 1998. But "I wasn't worried," he said. "I didn't really think it was going to be that bad."

At a meeting that included team physicians Dr. Pat Clare and Dr. Robert Dugas and head athletic trainer and physical therapist Jerry Weber, as well as Coach Frank Solich and running backs coach Dave Gillespie, however, Uhlir learned that his neck injury was life-threatening.

The initial diagnosis was that the injury would require corrective surgery and that he would have to wear a halo for six months. But a specialist in Los Angeles decided otherwise.

"I never, ever thought my body would let me down," Uhlir said, recalling the diagnosis that brought tears to his eyes and might have saved his life. "I just thought I was invincible, I guess."

He's "Coach" Uhlir to his former teammates now, and "they think it's funny," he said, referring to the title "Coach" not the circumstances that justify its use. He's among the team's five undergraduate assistants, all of whom have been forced to trade playing for the sideline.

The others are Josh Anderson, Sasho Becvarovski, Brandon Quindt and Leif Sidwell. And though the particulars are different, their stories are much the same as Uhlir's.

He walked on, following older brothers Troy and Todd, after earning all-state honors at Battle Creek, Neb., High School. He wouldn't have gone to Nebraska without encouragement from his brothers, who include not only Troy and Todd but also Tony, who played football at Peru State, and Tom.

"They were the main factor, their confidence in me," he said. "They saw talent in me, I guess, which I would have never seen if I wouldn't have had any brothers. They knew I could play."

They also knew how abruptly a football career could end. Troy suffered a knee injury, and Todd "blew his shoulder out," Tyrone said. Tom, the only one of the brothers who did-

n't play football in college, suffered a knee injury in high school.

"It can be over just like that," said Tyrone, who now shares that hard wisdom with his Cornhusker teammates. "I've told guys that, (to) enjoy it while you can; it could end."

But, he added, he expects their response to be the same as his when his brothers tried to tell him. "Actually, I was told that a lot by all of my brothers," he said. "I just blew it off."

Serving as an undergraduate assistant, working with the scout team defense, is salvation of a sort for him. "I would have been in total shock if I wouldn't have been able to hang out here anymore or be around all my friends. Practice and all, I mean that's part of it," he said.

The other part is playing, and "it's really hard right now, going to the games and just seeing everybody playing, knowing that I could have been out there."

He redshirted as a freshman and then played in 12 games as Willie Miller's back-up last season. He started the Iowa State game, because Miller was sidelined by an ankle sprain, and figured to be in a rotation with redshirted freshman Judd Davies backing up Miller this season.

Instead, he goes to practice every day and makes sure the scout team secondary is properly aligned. "I just have to know the basic coverages," he said. "You've got to know what's going on, how it's run, and keep up the intensity of the players on the scout team. It's not too hard."

"You get to yell a little. If they're not doing it, you've got to raise your voice."

He also can attend the coaches' meetings, but rarely does. "I have class," he explained.

Instead of getting treatment for bumps and bruises at the South Stadium on Sundays, Uhlir has been taking advantage of unseasonably warm temperatures to go bass fishing this fall.

"I go any chance I get," he said of his "alternative" to football.

He has lost 30 pounds since last spring, though "it took a while," he said. "I feel great. My heart's stopped racing, trying to keep up with my body. I have a lot more energy and stuff."

He stood in the tunnel leading to the South Stadium locker room as his former teammates passed by. Most acknowledged him. A few tapped him on the shoulder.

The literal pain is gone. But a figurative pain persists. "Everything I worked for my whole life is gone," he said. "That's all I ever thought I'd be is a football player."

At least he can smile when he talks about it now.

"They call me coach. They do," he said. "I don't mind. "But it's not a requirement." ■



Tyrone Uhlir played in 12 games last year as a backup fullback.

Mike Babcock is a former sports columnist for the Lincoln Journal Star. He has covered Nebraska football for more than 20 years. Mike can be reached at [mdb@inetnebr.com](mailto: mdb@inetnebr.com) or PO Box 6782, Lincoln, NE 68506

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A Quick Study

Redshirt freshman Davies making strides as Huskers' No. 2 fullback



**Bob
SCHALLER**

AFTER THE SEASON-OPENING WIN over San Jose State, it was obvious that red-shirt freshman Judd Davis was going to have a big role in the Husker offense as the backup fullback.

It was also obvious that backup quarterback Jammal Lord was going to be flipping a lot of stuff Davies' way.

"Don't believe a word he tells you," Lord said at the time, "he didn't know what he was doing out there today."

At the time, Davies admitted some truth to that.

"I forgot a couple of the plays," Davies admitted. "I went out there, and drew a blank a couple of times."

A lot has changed. Davies isn't forgetting the plays any longer. And during Nebraska's 59-0 flogging of Baylor, Davies continued to show strides.

"He's getting better every week," said running backs coach Dave Gillespie. "He's working hard."

This is a young man who is a student-athlete in every sense of the word, compiling a perfect 4.0 grade average to this point. He's also very active in his church and in the Huskers' various community outreach programs. He had a 3.99 grade point average in high school, so he's always taken the school work to heart, a great attribute for someone who has to have every play in the Big Red's thick playbook down to a "T" — or an "I," as it were.

In fact, while his physical skills are beyond many players his age, it is his mental approach and ability to think through things that put Davies on the fast track at NU.

"He picks things up fast," Gillespie said, "and he's always wanting to learn more."

That ability to take — and even ask for — criticism certainly will continue to serve Davies well in Lincoln.

His football résumé indicated he had plenty of potential before he set foot on the field at Nebraska. At Millard North (otherwise known as the Husker junior varsity the past few years, it seems), Davies was the Gatorade Prep Player of the year for the state, rushing for 1,500 yards and 23 touchdowns. As a linebacker, he made a must-be-a-typo 90 tackles — so he likes contact, not a bad trait for a fullback in the Husker offense. In his career at Millard North, he had more than 2,700 yards on the ground and 45 touchdowns.

His junior year of high school changed a lot for Davies; a horrible knee injury (a torn ACL in his left knee) shelved him for most of the year. That only rekindled his passion for football, while at the same time teaching him a lesson about

making the most of every day, every snap, every carry and every block. He came back from the rehab stronger than ever, as demonstrated by his eye-popping stats from his senior year.

And when he bleeds — which isn't often, considering he dishes out way more than he has to take in — it is only Big Red. Davies was recruited by the likes of Notre Dame, Ohio State, Michigan, Stanford and Kansas State, but only visited Nebraska, which he was very familiar with after attending the NU football camps three years in a row.

Davies is far along for a redshirt freshman, and it is obvious Davies will be the starter next year. He showed a burst of speed against Baylor, bolting for a 57-yard run. Davies was stopped short of the end zone, however, and he knows Lord will make him pay for that one.

"I thought I had a chance," Davies said with a smile. "Maybe next year, I'll have some more speed and get into the end zone on ones like that. If I'd have made a better stiffarm, I might have made it."

And he says the big catch — a play on which he went up high to make the reception — is nothing new for him.

"I feel like I've always been able to catch the ball. It's just that I haven't had to that much," Davies said with a shrug of his considerable shoulders.

At 6-foot and 242 pounds, Davies is built perfectly for his job. And with the mental maturation, he could be among the better players Nebraska has had at that position, if his improvement continues.

"It's getting better because I'm in the right place at the right time more than I used to be, and I'm getting a lot more confident," Davies said. "I feel fortunate to be playing behind (starter) Willie Miller, cause he's taught me a lot. That first game, when I was forgetting plays, Willie pulled me aside, and told me to start thinking."

As the Baylor post-game interviews wound down, Lord went by, delivering a good-natured shove at Davies. The future starting backfield mates have a definite, obvious bond.

"He's not forgetting plays," Lord said, poking at Davies.

"Yeah, now get out of here," Davies answered with a grin.

Sometimes things change.

Some things, though, stay the same. ■

So Much Enthusiasm

Van Horn, Husker baseball team ready to pick up where they left off



Curt McKEEVER

IT'S A PAINFUL SIGHT, and Nebraska baseball coach Dave Van Horn wants his team to be reminded of it every time it takes the field at Buck Beltzer Stadium this season.

Hanging on the locker room door that leads to the Huskers' dugout is a blown-up color picture of Stanford players celebrating in a dogpile. In the background, out of focus, one can also see Van Horn walking off the field with his head bowed.

The occasion was the Cardinal's 5-3 win over Nebraska in the deciding game of last year's Super Regional, a result that let Stanford advance to the College World Series and kept the Cornhuskers still dreaming of making its first trip.

Under the picture reads a caption: "Don't forget how close we were and how close we are."

Although Van Horn knows making it to Omaha will always be challenging, he has good reason to believe his fourth Nebraska team will make another strong run.

"There's just so much enthusiasm in our program right now, with the kids returning, the talent we brought in and then the new ballpark," Van Horn said. "I think the future of our baseball program is very bright."

After a record-setting 51-17 season, the Huskers will be one of the favorites in the Big 12 Conference this season and likely will start out among the nation's top 25.

Van Horn welcomes back a deep pitching staff that includes All-American Shane Komine (11-4, 2.24 earned-run average, 159 strikeouts), Jamie Rodrigue (9-4, 2.64), R.D. Speihs (8-2, 32.3) and Thom Ott (2-1, 1.26, 6 saves).

That group helped NU lead the nation in ERA, and during fall practice Van Horn saw no reason to think the pitchers will be any less dominant come next spring.

Among those he expects to make an early mark are Papillion-LaVista standout Jason Burch and hard-throwing reliever Derrick Conte, a redshirt freshman from Oklahoma City.

"As far as the fall's gone, it's been a little bit lopsided. The pitching's got after our hitters," Van Horn said. "That's pretty normal. I act like I'm frustrated with the hitters, but deep down inside, I'm very happy with the pitching."

"The younger guys had a lot of trouble facing guys like Shane, Derrick and Jamie. We've got kids throwing anywhere from 87 to 94 MPH, (so) they've seen a wide variety of guys and it's going to get us ready for spring."

Nebraska will have to replace the up-the-middle core of its team in All-American catcher Justin Cowan, steady shortstop Brandt Vlieger and speedy center fielder Jamal Strong. Adam Shabala, one of the hottest hitters the last two months last season, also moved on to professional ball.

But Van Horn still has plenty of experience in the outfield in Ada Stern, who will slide over to man center, and John Cole, who hit a NU freshman record .396 in 1999. Kearney

freshmen Drew Anderson also is in the running for significant playing time after a strong fall.

NU's infield will be anchored by All-Big 12 first baseman Dan Johnson, who hit .368 with 21 homers. Junior Will Bolt also returns at second base.

While Bolt missed fall practice recovering from knee surgery, Van Horn couldn't keep him completely off the field. At least not out of Haymarket Park, the \$32.1 million facility currently under construction near campus.

"Will and a couple other guys about two weeks ago tried to go out there and hit," Van Horn said, shaking his head in amazement. "They wanted to be the first to say they hit the first one that left the yard. They got run off pretty quick by the foreman."

That kind of enthusiasm and determination, though, is exactly what Van Horn is seeking. Because as much as he'll miss Cowan's bat, replacing his leadership might be a bigger key.

"Cowan didn't like to lose and he wanted what I think everybody wants, but he demonstrated that effort every day," Van Horn said. "You know, he played with a slight tear in his elbow all year and I think guys respected him playing in pain and not full speed all year, and he still had a great year."

"I think Will Bolt can be that leader. He's a fiery guy, and he wasn't here in the fall to really get after some people. But I think he brings that intensity to every game, and he's a practice guy."

Jed Morris, a left-handed hitting JUCO transfer from Seabrook, Texas, has emerged as the top candidate to replace Cowan.

At shortstop, Brandon Eymann, a left-handed hitter from Papillion-LaVista, and Willie Jones, a righty from Aurora, Colo., who Van Horn says is probably the team's best base-runner, could alternate early in the year.

Josh Hesse (.327 in 2000) will resume his post at third base, while all-league designated hitter Matt Hopper (.352, 21 home runs) also returns.

"We feel like we'll be right back in the middle of it," Van Horn said.

And if the weather cooperates enough, Nebraska might be in the middle of 4,500-seat Haymarket Park by April. If not, then Van Horn hopes his club can make a strong enough showing to earn one of the 16 NCAA Regional sites.

By mid-October, the stadium's grounds had been transformed from a mound of dirt into a massive structure that included the entire framework for the grandstands and the brick front to the park.

By June, who knows? Maybe it will be the Huskers doing the dogpiling this time. ■

Curt McKeever is a sportswriter, covering the University of Nebraska for the Lincoln Journal Star. In addition to reporting on football he is the primary beat writer for the men's basketball and baseball teams.



Work continues on the new Haymarket Park west of Memorial Stadium.

I-Backs Used

Buckhalter says he's comfortable being alternate

By Mike Babcock

Correll Buckhalter has accepted his role this season. At least he says he has.

The senior I-back isn't one to complain. So he might have been more frustrated than he's letting on. But his first concern has been the team. And he has done what was asked.

"I feel comfortable filling that role," he said.

He has alternated with Dan Alexander, and even shares first team on the depth chart. But he has always been the second I-back to go into games and he has gotten fewer carries. Nevertheless, he has gone about his business with an up-beat attitude.

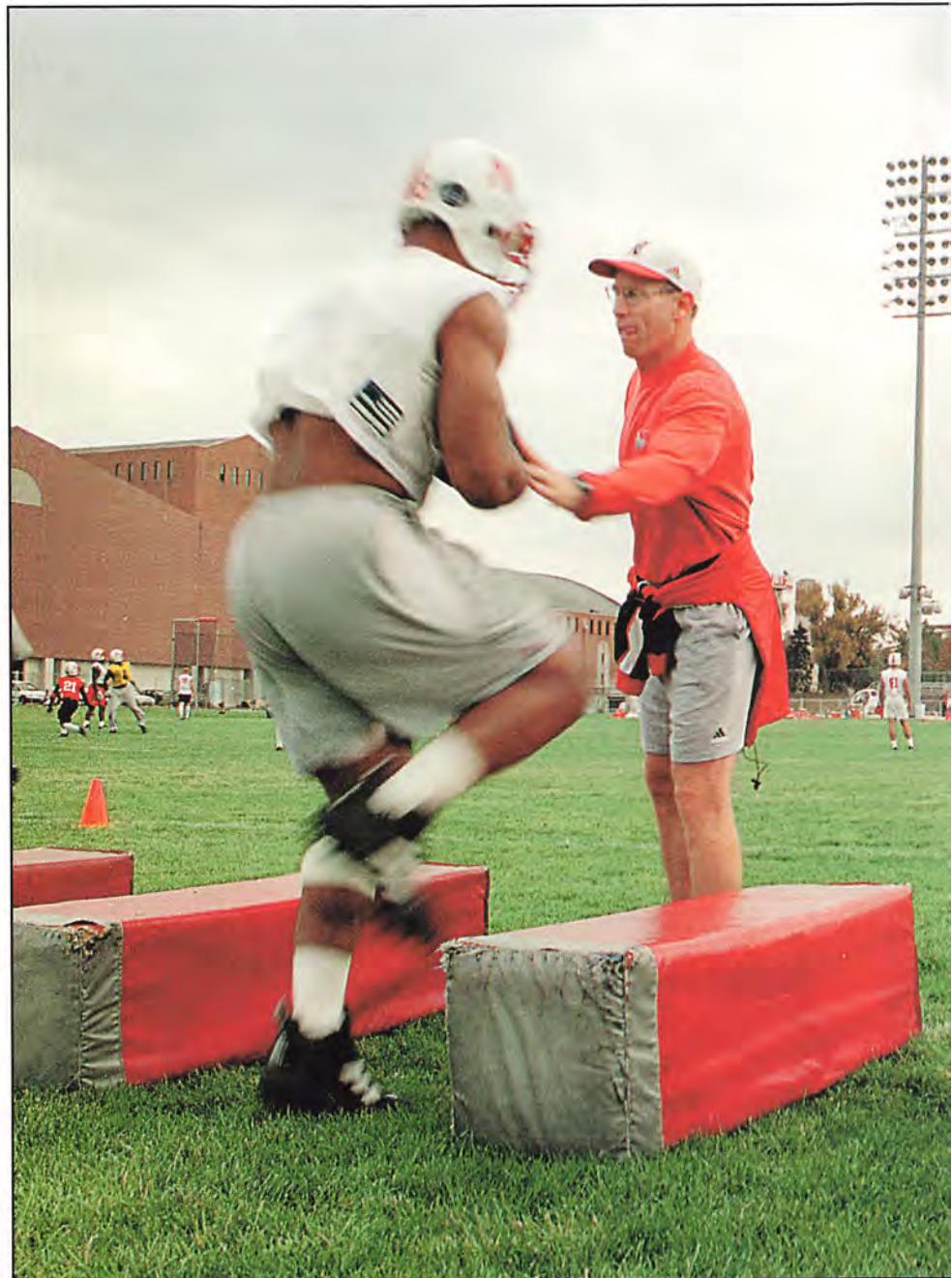
"I think it works great," he said. "Whenever you have a system where you have two guys at a position who can get the job done on a great level, it's always good."

Nebraska has subscribed to that theory this season, utilizing two I-backs who almost certainly will rank in the Cornhusker career top 10 in rushing yardage when they are finished.

Through the first seven games, they had rushed for a combined 1,335 yards and scored 13 touchdowns. "There are teams out there that have one back carrying the ball 40 times and getting 290 yards a game," said Coach Frank Solich. "I do believe those backs could do that."

"But it makes sense also, if you have two quality backs, to make sure that you're keeping them fresh and giving them both opportunities with the ball. And they both have performed well."

Nebraska has alternated I-backs the last three seasons, in part because of injuries. But this season, the Cornhuskers have done so intentionally, taking advantage of different running styles.



Alexander is more physical. Buckhalter is more of a slasher.

"I think it just goes back to what you have," said running backs coach Dave Gillespie. "I mean, if you had one guy that was clearly going to give you your best opportunity every play, more so than another guy, then that guy would certainly be getting the bulk of the reps."

"I'm sure that's what other schools

do that run a guy 30, 35 times. They think there would be a significant dropoff, probably, to the next guy. But we're fortunate to have two, three, four guys that you could possibly not have that kind of dropoff. So it makes sense to keep them fresh."

Alexander and Buckhalter are followed on the depth chart by sophomore Dahrran Diedrick, redshirted freshman DeAntae Grixby and sopho-

d to Sharing



Running backs coach Dave Gillespie tries to knock the ball loose during a practice drill.

"I saw Dahrran getting down," said Buckhalter. "But I talked to him. So he knows what the situation is. It's hard to get a three-back rotation because you have to have a guy get into the rhythm of the game. Dahrran kind of realizes that now. Their time will come. And they'll be ready for it."

Diedrick admits to having been frustrated at first. "I guess when you don't get in very often and then when you do get in and things don't go perfectly well, you can get a little frustrated, just wanting to get in there a little bit more often," he said. "But since then, things started getting better."

"Every time I get in, I just do the best with what I get a chance to do."

Diedrick and the other back-ups have focused on improving in practice so that, with Alexander and Buckhalter finishing, they'll be ready to compete for the starting job in the spring.

Gillespie has had little opportunity to use back-ups this season because of how games have gone. And that's been frustrating. "We certainly would like to be able to play those guys more and get them more reps," he said. "But the flip-side of that is, those guys understand the rotation."

"I go over it with them every week before the game. I tell them how it's going to work. So they're certainly aware of it, and they accept that to some degree. I don't think they ever really, truly believe they shouldn't be the guy out there. But they understand where we're coming from."

"And to their credit, they work hard every day in anticipation of their opportunity coming. You just admire that in those guys. They really come to practice ready to go."

Despite their competition for playing time, the I-backs are a unified group, according to Diedrick. "We all like each other a lot," he said. "Whenever somebody makes a mistake, we try to correct it and tell them what they did wrong. We try to encourage each other to go hard on every play."

"If you don't remember something, you ask. We're all trying to get each other to be better players. That's

more Thunder Collins. Redshirted freshman Josh Davis also was in the mix until suffering a left ACL injury during practice the week of the Baylor game.

The initial prognosis was that Davis would be able to return in the spring.

The knee "probably will not be 100 percent in terms of exploding off of it, making cuts off of it. But it will be cer-

tainly stable and will be OK to get practice time in the spring," Solich said.

Spring will be important for Davis and the other young I-backs, whose opportunities have been limited this season. None of them have gotten significant playing time.

Early in the season, that frustrated Diedrick, the most experienced of the back-ups.

important to the success of the team. If I came in and Correll and Dan didn't help me, I probably wouldn't be at the level I am now. And if I don't help people that come in after me, then when the time comes for them to play, they won't be at the level they need to be."

At mid-season, Buckhalter was on pace to climb as high as sixth on the career rushing chart. He'll finish among the most productive I-backs in school history, despite being No. 2.

Alexander also will be among them, despite having to share time.

"I'm sure that it is not easy," said Gillespie. "I'm sure that deep down inside of them there is that instinct that they want it maybe a little bit more and they would like to see what they could do with 30, 35 carries. But again, they understand what we're trying to get done."

"I think they've really bought into the team concept of it and have really tried to suppress maybe their own selfish desires for what we, at least, think is the team's best interest."

Alexander and Buckhalter have looked at the positive side of alternating.

"I don't think I would (like to) be somewhere else, getting 40 carries a game, because I think that would be too much on my body," Buckhalter said. ■

Lucky No. 30

I-back Dahrran Diedrick wanted a No. 21 jersey like he wore at Cedarbrae Collegiate Institute in Scarborough, Ontario, Canada, when he began playing at Nebraska last season.

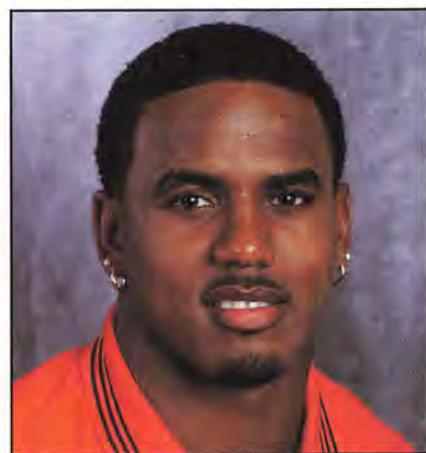
But rover Mike Brown had that number and even though he was an offensive player, Diedrick couldn't get a duplicate No. 21 because of the possibility of his being on a kicking team.

So Diedrick took his second choice, a No. 30 jersey.

His reasoning for the selection was simple enough. "I just thought it was a lucky number, a good number, because most of the running backs that have worn it have done well," he said.

Even though he came from Canada, Diedrick was aware of the significance of No. 30. The top two rushers in Cornhusker history, Mike Rozier and Ahman Green, both wore it.

"Everyone was calling me 'Ahman' my freshman year," said Diedrick, a sophomore. "I knew Ahman had just worn it, and I knew



Dahrran Diedrick

Mike Rozier had won a Heisman Trophy wearing it.

"I just thought I'd come in and keep the tradition going."

True freshman Willie Amos, a defensive back, also wore a No. 30 jersey until the week after the Iowa State game. At least once during that game, he and Diedrick were on the field at the same time, on a kicking team. As a result, Amos has worn a No. 27 jersey ever since. ■

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It's a Family Affair

Husker tight end Tracey Wistrom appreciates the support of his parents and older brothers

Finding Ron and Kathy Wistrom on Nebraska football game days is easy, providing you can pick them out of a crowd. Because wherever the Cornhuskers are, you can count on a crowd.

And you can count on Ron and Kathy being in that crowd.

"My parents never miss a Nebraska game, home or away," Tracey Wistrom said.

Home or away, they make the trip from Webb City, Mo.

Their streak began in 1994, when son Grant was a Cornhusker freshman. And it will continue until Tracey finishes his career next season. "My dad, this is what he lives for," said Tracey.

"This is his favorite time of year. He gets to see all three of his kids at each level of football, one high school, one college, one NFL. There aren't many parents who can say that. They love it."

Grant plays for the St. Louis Rams. Chance, the oldest brother, is the head football coach at Seneca, Mo., High School. And Tracey, of course, is Nebraska's starting tight end.

Ron and Kathy attend all of the Rams' home games, and they occasionally go to Seneca High games. But "their first priority is, they always make it to my games," Tracey said.

In the past seven years, they've become Cornhusker fans. But the reason for that interest has been supporting their sons. "I've been blessed, having the parents I have," said Tracey.

Such cohesiveness characterizes the Wistrom family.

He and Grant talk on the phone "three to four times a week," he said.

"We keep in touch quite a bit, see how each other is doing and how things are going. I think it surprises people that we don't talk football nearly as much as what people might think. There are some times when I don't even have a clue who they're (the Rams) playing."

"We kind of want to get away from it (football)."

Grant is just two years older than Tracey. Chance is seven years older.

He and Chance "talk quite a bit, too," said Tracey. "He's pretty busy, so it's tough knowing when he's going to be around. He's more the person I go to for advice. It seems like he's been through about everything, from injuries to school, whatever you want to talk about."

"I think Grant would tell you the same thing."

Tracey and Grant became close about the time Grant came to Nebraska.

"When we were younger, we were like typical brothers who fight," Tracey said. "I got picked on. And to be honest, there were times when I couldn't stand Grant."

Even so, "I can't remember a time where my parents had to force us to hang out together. There may have been times where Grant got to go out with his friends and I wanted to go hang out with them but Grant didn't want me to. And Dad would say, 'It'd be nice if you let Tracey tag along.'

"But for the most part, we did it. And when there are three of you, it's always easy to pick up a basketball and go out and play some '21' or something, where it's one-on-one-on-one."

"We really did just kind of like to be around each other."

Being the youngest, Tracey used to be at a decided disadvantage in the "21" games.

"As I got older, it balanced out a little bit," he said. "I think I can take them both now in basketball. But for a little while it was kind of a disadvantage. And they didn't take it easy on me."

The competitiveness he learned in those fraternal games has served him well at Nebraska, just as it served Grant, a two-time All-American and the Outland Trophy winner in 1997.

Grant, who didn't sit out a redshirt season, played on Coach Tom Osborne's three national championship teams. And he was a driving force as a co-captain on the third in 1997.

His encouragement was important in Tracey's following him to Nebraska. "He was honest, but I don't think Grant really had a doubt in his mind that I could play here," said Tracey, who arrived as a 195-pound tight end. "He had been here three years then. He knew what it took to play. And he knew me. He knew how I was. So I think Grant was pretty confident I could come here and be successful."

"He'd say to me, 'You've got to work hard, just like anything else.'"

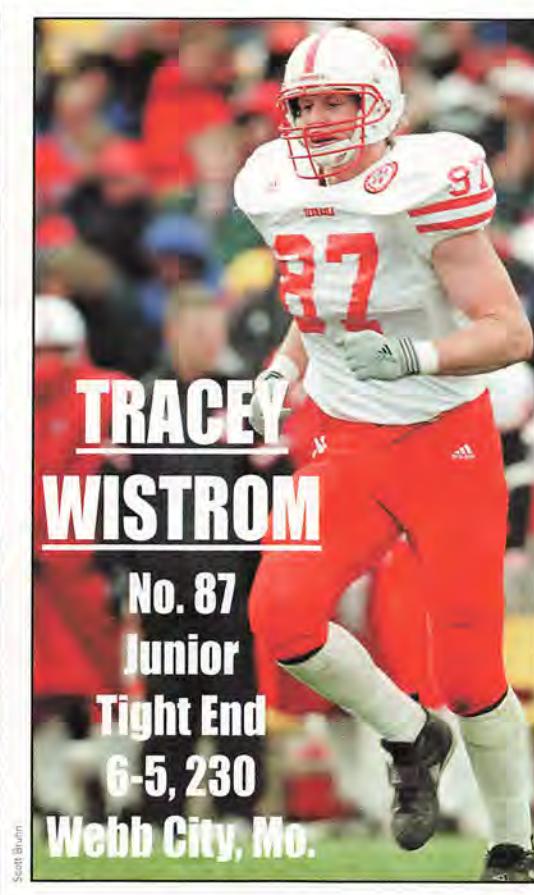
His parents taught him the same lesson.

"That's just kind of the way we were raised," Tracey said. "If we're doing something, we're going to go all out. We're going to set goals and we're going to do what it takes to reach those goals."

And their parents will be there supporting them.

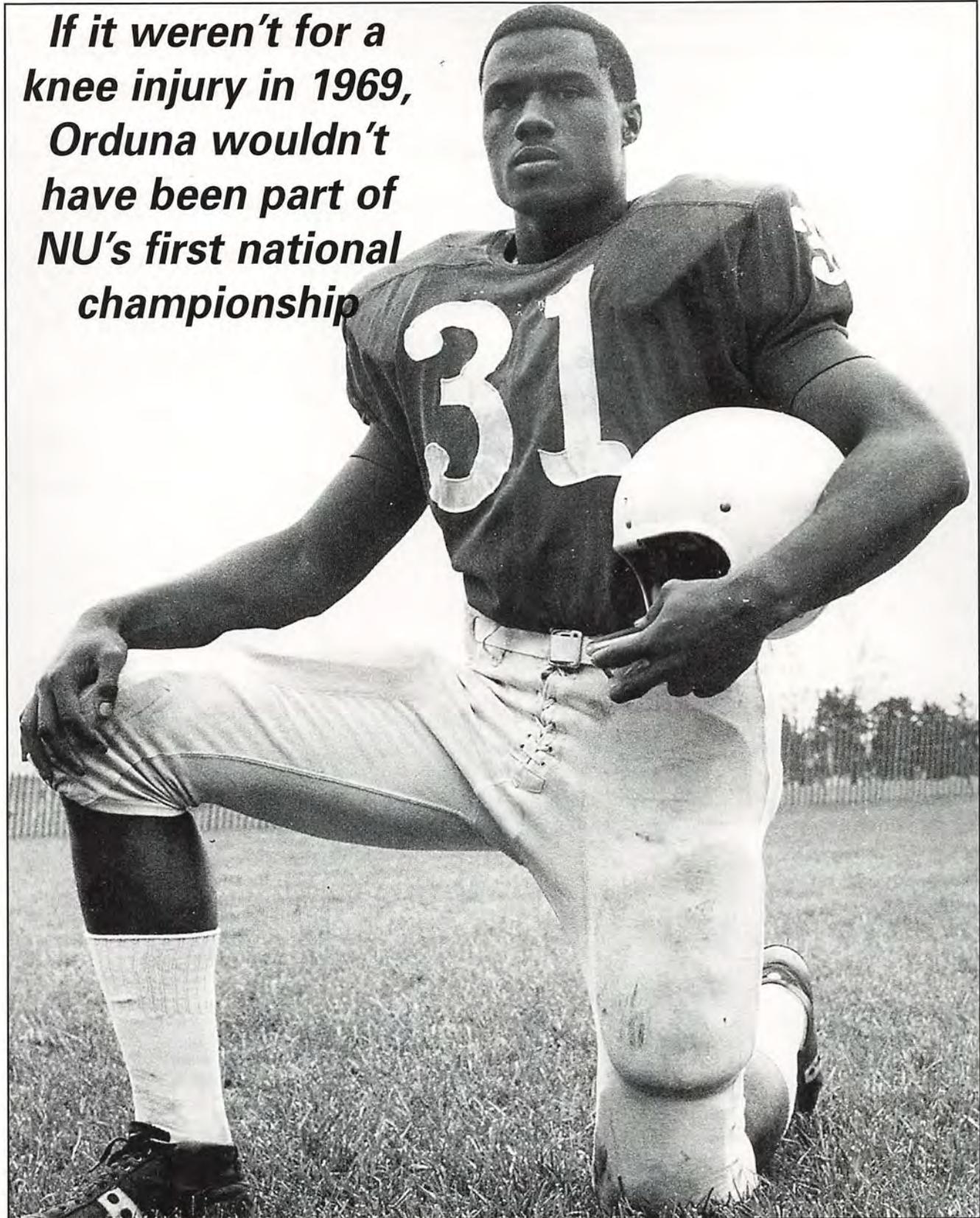
"Having them at every one of my games means a lot," said Tracey. "I know there are kids whose parents can't make it. I think I probably take it for granted that my parents are always there."

"But it really means a lot." ■



A Blessing?

If it weren't for a knee injury in 1969, Orduna wouldn't have been part of NU's first national championship



The First 1

Eighth in a Series

Thirty years have passed since Nebraska won its first official national title. And during those 30 years, Nebraska has finished atop the national rankings four more times, including three from 1994 to 1997. As the 1970 season illustrates, championships can depend on luck as well as on preparation and design. In a 12-part series, Huskers Illustrated takes a game-by-game look at the 1970 season.

By Mike Babcock

Joe Orduna was sustained by his religious faith after injuring his right knee in the fall of 1969.

"Coach, God is going to heal me," he told Bob Devaney.

His heart-felt assertion elicited Devaney's Irish wit.

"In case God doesn't, we're going to operate," he said.

For many athletes such an injury, prior to what would have been Orduna's senior season at Nebraska, would have been traumatic. But "I consider that injury a blessing," said Orduna.

Joe Orduna rushed for 1,968 yards and 26 touchdowns in his three seasons (1967, 1968, 1970) at Nebraska. He stood 19th on NU's career rushing chart entering this season.

Game 8 Nebraska 41, Kansas 20

Oct. 17, 1970
Memorial Stadium, Lawrence, Kan.

	Score	Time
(First Quarter)		
NU — Dan Schneiss, 2- yd run (Paul Rogers kick)	7-0	13:18
NU — Rogers, 28- yd field goal	10-0	1:22
KU — Vince O'Neill, 96- yd kickoff return (kick failed)	10-6	1:09
(Second Quarter)		
KU — John Riggins, 2- yd run (Bob Helmbacher kick)	10-13	13:23
KU — Dan Heck, 1- yd run (Helmbacher kick)	10-20	9:28
NU — Guy Ingles, 80- yd pass from Van Brownson (Rogers kick)	17-20	9:17
NU — Brownson, 15- yd run (Rogers kick)	24-20	3:23
(Third Quarter)		
NU — Johnny Rodgers, 5- yd pass from Brownson (Rogers kick)	31-20	3:08
(Fourth Quarter)		
NU — Brownson, 2- yd run (Rogers kick)	38-20	13:22
NU — Rogers, 32- yd field goal	41-20	8:40

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**POWER
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If not for the knee injury, he would have finished his Cornhusker career in 1969, which means he wouldn't have shared in the joy of Nebraska's first national championship in 1970.

"I'm glad I got to be there for that first one," he said.

Orduna, an I-back, was not only there for the first one, he was a key contributor, leading the team in rushing and scoring. He rushed for 834 yards and 14 touchdowns.

He also threw one touchdown pass, a 14-yarder to split end Guy Ingles in the fourth game of the season, a 35-14 victory at Minnesota. He and Ingles had been staying after practice to work on the pass, which was thrown so poorly that Orduna felt compelled to apologize to the coaches when he came off the field. "We got the touchdown," he said. "But Devaney never called it again."

Orduna wasn't recruited for his passing prowess, anyway. He was an outstanding high school running back at Omaha Central, following in a tradition that included Gale Sayers.

Orduna even wore Sayers' No. 48 jersey.

Sayers had gone to Kansas, a recruiting failure that almost certainly contributed in some way to Nebraska's firing Bill Jennings, Devaney's predecessor, following the 1961 season.

Orduna felt pressure also to go elsewhere. "I think there was a racial barrier thing," he said, "My friends and relatives told me, 'Don't go to Nebraska. They don't let black people play.' "

As he remembers it, the Cornhuskers weren't all that aggressive in recruiting him. He was invited to sit with some Nebraska football players at a high school wrestling meet once, and Devaney came to Omaha for a home visit. His father even recorded the visit with a movie camera, Orduna said.

Then on letter of intent signing day, he remembers a Cornhusker assistant waiting in a car outside his house until 8 a.m., the earliest he could sign. "I didn't think that much about it," he said.

Several of those among

Nebraska's career-rushing leaders have followed Orduna from Central, including Ahman Green, Calvin Jones, Keith Jones and Leodis Flowers.

Green and Calvin Jones rank second and third, respectively, on the Cornhuskers' all-time rushing list. Orduna is 23rd. He rushed for 1,968 yards and scored 26 touchdowns in three seasons.

Redshirted freshman DeAntae Grixby is the latest in Central connection.

The knee injury that prevented him from playing in 1969 was the first of two Orduna suffered at Nebraska. He suffered another, to his left knee, in the spring of 1970.

He remained up-beat in both cases. "This sounds bad, but I was too dumb to be down," he said. "I was very, very much enthralled with my spiritual walk with God at that time.

"When it happened, I just said, 'Oh well, God knows what he's doing.'

Others said the second injury "would be the downfall of my career," he said.

Not only was there concern that he would lose a step or two of speed but also Jeff Kinney, who had replaced him as a sophomore in 1969, would be competing for playing time.

Again, Orduna was undaunted. He would alternate with Kinney, no problem.

"I thought it was a great idea," he said. "I wouldn't get tired."

His comeback from the second surgery was facilitated by a summer of running up a hill in Omaha and praying. In the spring of 1970, he had a profound religious experience, while visiting his wife-to-be, Valerie, in southern California. On his return, he started a prayer group at Nebraska.

The religious experience in California was his second. The first occurred at a Fellowship of Christian Athletes retreat while he was still in high school. "It was dynamic," he said.

"I very much centered my life on being lived for the glory of God."

Orduna was a second-round draft pick of the NFL's San Francisco 49ers in 1971. "My rookie year was the worst year of my life," he said. "It was a 'wilderness' expe-

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rience for me.

"I never felt accepted by them, the coaches. I never seemed to fit in."

His relationship with head coach Dick Nolan, who hadn't wanted to draft him, was such that he was released by the 49ers in 1972 and caught on with the New York Giants. He played with the Giants in 1972 and 1973, finishing his professional career with the Baltimore Colts in 1974.

That first year under Nolan "taught me a great deal," said Orduna. "It was humbling, and cleansing. I would never exchange that year for a glorious year. It was a time of character building. My entire life has been one of character building. I have been changed again and again and again."

After leaving professional football, he worked in marketing, advertising and personnel management. For the last seven years, he has been a middle school science teacher in Orange, Calif.

He also coaches cross country and track and field at the school.

He and Valerie have lived in nearby Irvine for 20 years, raising three children.

The children have the mementos from his playing career. But the memories remain, of Devaney and assistants Clete Fischer and "Iron Mike" Corgan, and trainers George Sullivan and Paul Schneider.

He was used as a wingback at times as a sophomore, when Tom Osborne was the receivers coach. "Tom Osborne was probably the only coach who really worked with me on athletic techniques and skills," he said. "Tom taught us to catch the ball with one hand and never break stride.

"If you can touch it, you can catch it. I still marvel at that."

Times were different then. "We understood commitment," said Orduna. And excessive self-expression on the football field wasn't really accepted anywhere, including at Nebraska.

"The most daring thing we did was wear white shoes," Orduna said.

He and Cornhusker teammates Mike Green and Dick Davis bought the white shoes.

But he was so embarrassed, I dyed mine black right away." ■

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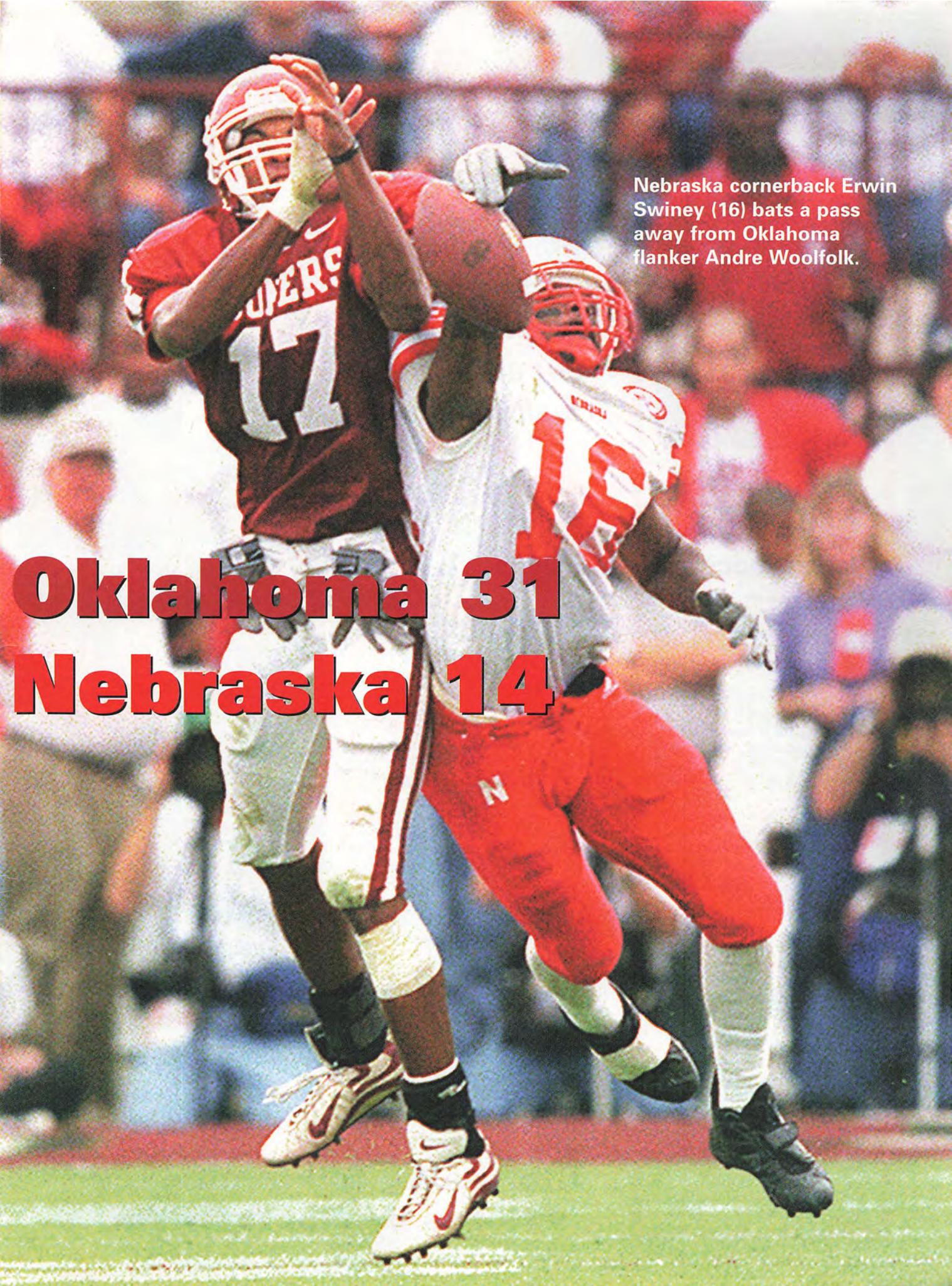
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Nebraska cornerback Erwin
Swiney (16) bats a pass
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Oklahoma 31
Nebraska 14

Husker Player of the Game



Eric Crouch

OU Adjusted After Crouch's Early Success

Oklahoma's defense didn't focus on Eric Crouch. At least, that's what Sooner linebacker Torrance Marshall claimed. "We weren't keying on him," Marshall said.

"Everybody had a responsibility, and we knew that going into the game if everyone took care of that, we should be successful in our defense. We were able to do that except for early in the game.

"We were just excited and the emotion was going."

Crouch capitalized on those things early, leading Nebraska to a pair of quick touchdowns.

But Oklahoma's defense adjusted.

Even so, Crouch kept trying. "If you can stop us from executing, then you've done your job," Crouch said. "And they (the Sooners) did that more times than not today.

"So that's what was a little bit frustrating."

Crouch was the game's leading rusher, with 103 yards on 24 carries, and became the 34th NCAA Division I-A quarterback to rush for 2,000 yards in his career. He passed Tommie Frazier on Nebraska's career-rushing list by a quarterback and now ranks second behind Steve Taylor. ■

All Soo

Nebraska scores on its first two possessions, but after that, it's all Oklahoma

O ranges pelted Owen Field as the final seconds ticked away. And when the clock on the scoreboard above the south stands registered 00:00, the field was assailed by celebrants, some of whom managed to dismantle the high-visibility yellow goal posts at the stadium's south end.

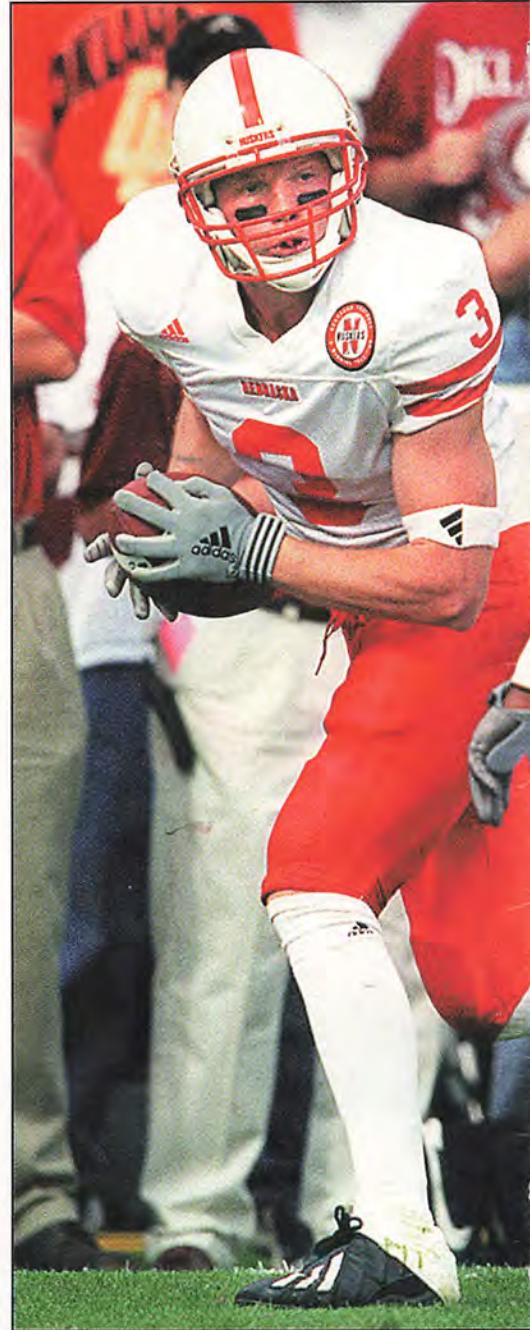
Somewhere in the mass of humanity, Eric Crouch congratulated Josh Heupel on third-ranked Oklahoma's 31-14 upset of top-ranked Nebraska, one quarterback to another.

"There were a lot of people running around, jumping around and going crazy, so it was a little tough to say a lot to him," Crouch told reporters afterward. "But I congratulated him.

"He played a great game. He found ways to make it happen."

Crouch also found ways to make it happen early in a game that matched the top two teams in the initial Bowl Championship Series rankings. Hence, the tossing of oranges, signifying the BCS national title game in the Orange Bowl on Jan. 3, as well as a blatant disregard for the safety of others.

After the Cornhuskers scored on their first two possessions to take a



14-0 lead less than seven minutes into the game, however, Crouch couldn't find any more ways to put

Stories by Mike Babcock
Photos by Scott Bruhn

Sooners Later



Nebraska split end Matt Davison eludes Oklahoma cornerback Derrick Strait to complete a 39-yard scoring play for the game's first touchdown. Strait got his revenge later with an interception and 32-yard return for a touchdown.

sible," he said.

Even more remarkable, perhaps, was the fact that Nebraska managed only 80 yards rushing on 31 carries in the final three quarters. That figures out to 2.6 yards per carry.

"The same plays that worked early on were tried again, and they didn't work with the effectiveness that they did early on," Cornhusker Coach Frank Solich said. "We played well at times.

"We put bits and pieces of a game together."

But the most important pieces were missing.

After falling behind 14-0, "Oklahoma stepped it up and then we needed to step it up again, and we did not step it up the way we needed to get this game turned around," said Solich.

Nebraska's undoing was the Sooners' 24-point second quarter, which could be attributed to Heupel, a senior from Aberdeen, S.D., who completed 20-of-34 passes for 300 yards and a touchdown.

The touchdown pass, a 34-yarder to Curtis Fagan for a tie at 14, characterized Heupel's performance.

Rover Joe Walker "was scot-free on a 'max' blitz," said Cornhusker defensive coordinator Craig Bohl. "And he's one of our fastest defenders. Heupel . . . he just kept retreating."

"It's a very, very difficult throw to be able to throw with that kind of pressure coming at you and then put the ball on the money when you're retreating. It's a very, very difficult throw to make."

"A great majority of quarterbacks are not able to make that. He made it."

And that wasn't the only time, though the others weren't as dramatic.

"If you go back and look at the tapes, he's uncanny with those kind

points on the board.

That was a tribute to an Oklahoma defense with an undersized front but enough speed and athleticism to shackle the Cornhuskers, who went into the nationally televised game ranked second in the nation in total offense and first in rushing. They averaged

499.3 yards, including 379.7 rushing, per game.

Against Oklahoma, they managed 328 and 195 yards, respectively. "That's as good of a defensive game as you'll ever see against Nebraska," said Oklahoma Coach Bob Stoops.

Holding the Cornhuskers under 200 yards rushing is "almost impos-



Nebraska's inability to run the football consistently and its inability to stop OU quarterback Josh Heupel were two keys to the Oklahoma victory. I-backs Dan Alexander (above) and Correll Buckhalter were limited to 40 yard rushing. The Husker defense, including Jon Clanton (55, right), sacked Heupel three times, but he still passed for 300 yards.

of throws," Solich said. "Their receivers never give up on a play, even if they're covered.

"There were a few times where we had them covered very well, and I thought their receivers went up and battled for the ball, and a couple of times came down with it. They made some big plays that kept some drives alive, that gave them quite a bit of momentum, especially in the second half."

Nebraska's inability to generate offense, however, made that point moot.

It wasn't for lack of effort, particularly by Crouch, who rushed or passed on a career-high 51 of the Cornhuskers' 70 plays from scrimmage. He ran for 103 yards and the second touchdown and completed 12-of-27 passes for 133 yards and the first touchdown to split end Matt Davison.

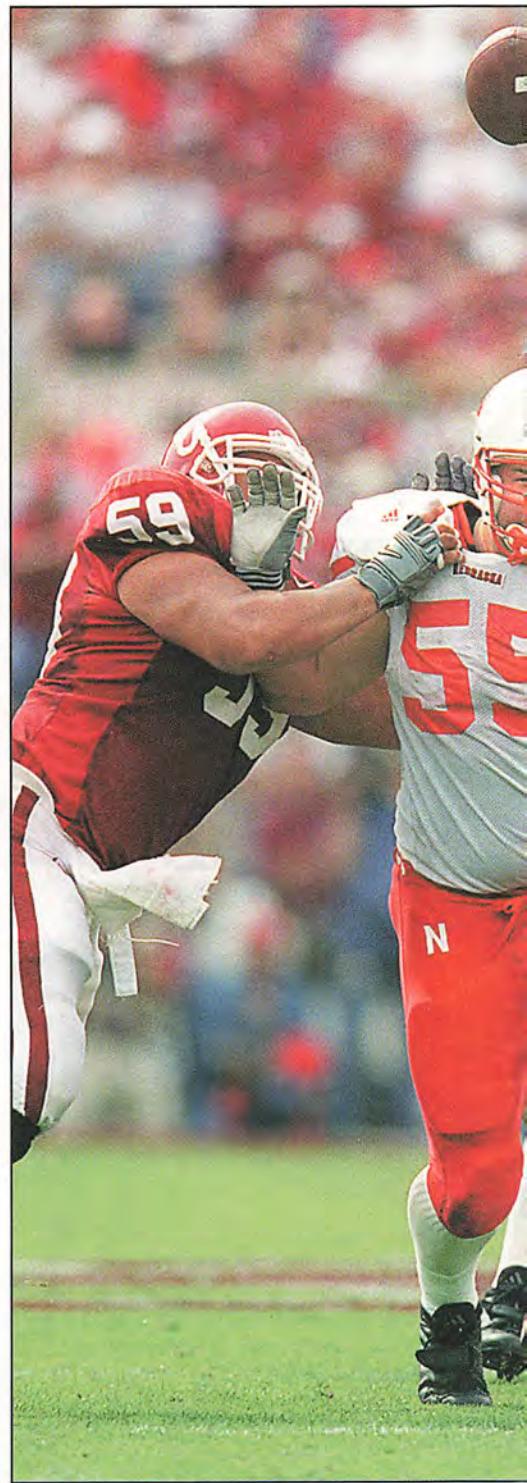
Crouch completed his first five passes and rushed for 56 yards in the first quarter.

"I thought he played very well early on," said Solich. "Initially, he made big plays. He threw the ball well. Then as the game went on, he had more pressure on him. They stepped it up defensively.

"Usually when you have a quarterback that starts struggling in a game, it's probably a combination of things. And certainly that involves everybody. But I thought he played with great heart."

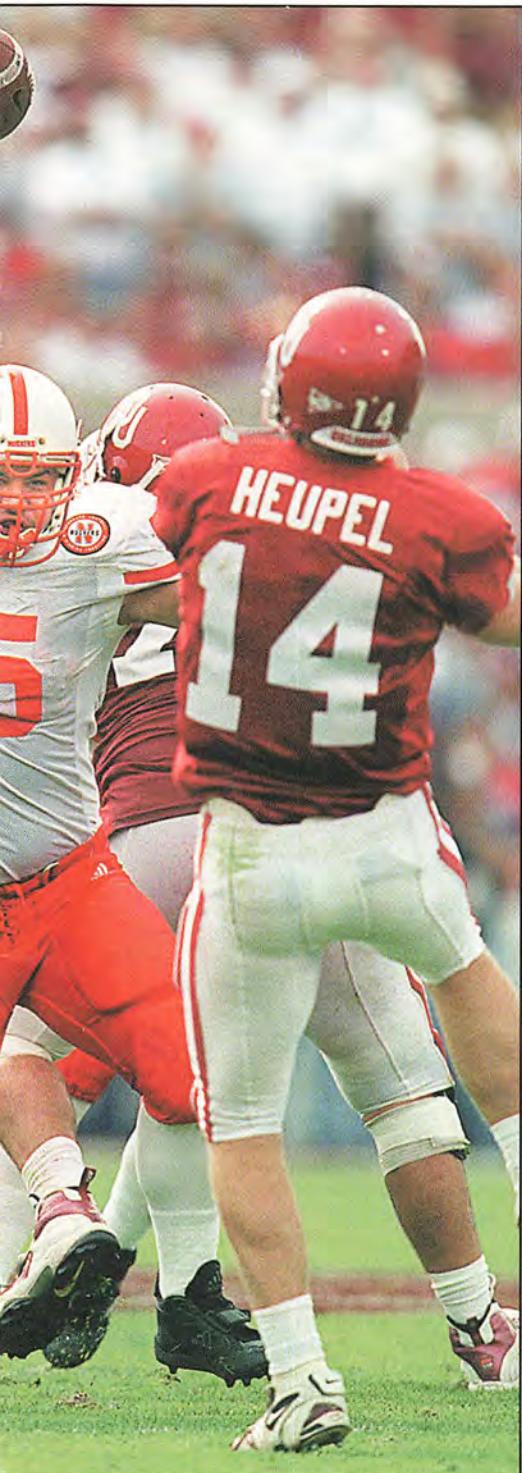
Oklahoma, which has defeated Texas (63-14), No. 2- and No. 3-ranked Kansas State (41-31) and Nebraska in consecutive games over a four-week period, showed no signs of panic, despite the early deficit. "I've been in games before where momentum has definitely swung," Solich said.

"We had everything going our way early on. We were moving the ball and controlling the ball on offense the way we wanted to do. We appeared to have some things going our way.



"But the test of a good football team is when you're backed up to the wall like that, how you respond. And they (the Sooners) responded very well. We needed to make a counter comeback, and I thought we tried. I thought we played hard, gave a great effort. But we were a little off on some things."

Among those things was offensive execution, according to Crouch, who threw an interception that was returned 32 yards by Derrick Strait for the game's final points early in



4TH & INCHES

Notes And Quotes From The Oklahoma Game

UNFLAPPABLE HEUPEL

Nebraska's defense didn't hold anything back in trying to deal with Josh Heupel. "We tried whole host of things against him," said Cornhusker defensive coordinator Craig Bohl. "Some things were somewhat effective. Other things were not."

"We had a full variety (of blitzes). We brought the whole house. We brought a zone blitz. We brought a fire blitz. We played some man. But Heupel, I thought, was very good at getting the ball off."

Nebraska rush end Kyle Vanden Bosch also complimented the senior from Aberdeen, S.D. "We threw a lot of things at him, and he adjusted well. He really didn't change my impressions. I knew he was a big-time quarterback and he stepped up and made the big plays," Vanden Bosch said.

Vanden Bosch had one of the Cornhuskers' three sacks of Heupel. Weakside linebacker Randy Stella and nose tackle Jason Lohr had the others. Stella was credited with 10 tackles total.

"We wanted to come with a lot of pressure. We sent a lot of people at him, and they did a good job of picking it up," said Vanden Bosch. "He did a good job of eluding the pass rush."

"It's frustrating. We didn't have as many hits on him as we'd like to. He did a good job of recognizing the blitz and checking to different plays."

ADD HEUPEL

Nebraska Coach Frank Solich credited not only Heupel but also his receivers, including Curtis Fagan, who caught six passes for 95 yards and a touchdown, and Andre Woolfolk, who caught five passes for 66 yards. "There were a couple of key, certainly, passes where it didn't look like a receiver was going to be in the area to make the catch and one gets there," said Solich.

Heupel and Oklahoma's receivers are "an excellent combination," he said. "They're all playmakers and they've made their fair share against everybody they've played this year."

"We knew they would make some plays. But we hoped we would respond to that, control that to a degree, and certainly put some points up on the board."

The 14 points were the fewest by Nebraska since a 19-0 loss at Arizona State in 1996.

BELOW AVERAGE

Oklahoma went into the game ranked first in the nation in scoring, averaging 46.7 points per game. The 31 points were a season low for the Sooners. Their previous low was 34 against Kansas.

And actually, Nebraska's defense allowed only 21 of the 31 points.

Oklahoma took possession at the Cornhusker 4-yard line following a blocked Dan Hadenfeldt punt in the second quarter and had to settle for a field goal, which gave it a 17-14 lead. And the Sooners scored their final touchdown on a 32-yard Derrick Strait interception return early in the third quarter.

"I was pleased with how our guys battled," Bohl said. However, "our ability to make plays probably wasn't where it needed to be. I was pleased with how our players regrouped after halftime."

"I think we executed a little bit better in the second half."

Oklahoma had only 123 total yards after the intermission.

FIFTH THEFT

Nebraska free safety Troy Watchorn intercepted a Heupel pass late in the third quarter to give the Cornhuskers possession at the Oklahoma 39-yard line. Nebraska was unable to capitalize, however, failing to convert on fourth-and-5 at the 34-yard line.

Solich decided against attempting a field goal, which, if successful, would have cut the deficit to 31-17. "The game was not going to be won by field goals," he said. "It was going to be won by whoever put touchdowns on the board."

The interception was Watchorn's fifth of the season, a team high.

Heupel had thrown 145 consecutive passes and 100 consecutive pass completions since his last interception. His 300 passing yards were the most by an Oklahoma quarterback against Nebraska. The previous high was 187 yards by Danny Bradley in 1983, a game Nebraska won 28-21.

BRIEFLY NOTED

— The Cornhuskers were penalized four times for 50 yards total. "We probably hurt ourselves penalty-wise maybe more so than what you want to do in this type of ball game," said Solich.

— Cornhusker defensive tackle Loran Kaiser tried to play for the first time in four games. The senior co-captain from Farwell, Neb., continues to be bothered by a sprained foot. ■

the third quarter.

"That was a mistake by me," said Crouch. "I think I probably would have been smarter to throw that one out of bounds. But you take a chance sometimes in big games like this."

"You want to make plays. And sometimes you do that."

Heupel made his share. And Crouch was among the first to congratulate him, as a celebration that would carry well into an October night on the streets of Norman began. ■

2000 Schedule

(Team's current record)

1 Sept. 2	San Jose State (6-3), W 49-13
2 Sept. 9	at Notre Dame (6-2), W 27-24
3 Sept. 23	Iowa (1-8), W 42-13
4 Sept. 30	Missouri (2-6), W 42-24
5 Oct. 7	at Iowa State (6-2), W 49-27
6 Oct. 14	at Texas Tech (6-3), W 56-3
7 Oct. 21	Baylor (2-6), W 59-0
8 Oct. 28	at Oklahoma (7-0), L 31-14
9 Nov. 4	Kansas (4-4), 2:30 p.m., ABC (Homecoming)
10 Nov. 11	at Kansas State (7-2), TBA
11 Nov. 24	Colorado (2-6), 11 a.m., ABC
Dec. 2	Big 12 Championship at Kansas City, ABC

Big 12 Standings

North			
	Conf.	All	
Nebraska	4	1	7 1
Kansas State	3	2	7 2
Iowa State	3	2	6 2
Kansas	2	3	4 4
Colorado	2	3	2 6
Missouri	1	4	2 6

South			
	Conf.	All	
Oklahoma	4	0	7 0
Texas	4	1	6 2
Texas A&M	4	1	6 2
Texas Tech	2	3	6 3
Oklahoma State	0	4	2 5
Baylor	0	5	2 6

Oct. 28 results

Oklahoma 31, Nebraska 14
Texas A&M 26, Kansas State 10
Texas 48, Baylor 14
Texas Tech 45, Kansas 39
Colorado 37, Oklahoma State 21
Iowa State 39, Missouri 20

Nonconference opponents

Notre Dame 34, Air Force 31, ot
Wisconsin 13, Iowa 7
San Jose State 57, Hawaii 48

Upcoming Opponents' Schedules

Kansas (4-4)
at SMU, L 31-17
Ala.-Birmingham, W 23-20
So. Illinois, W 42-0
at Oklahoma, L 34-16
Kansas State, L 52-13
at Missouri, W 38-17
Colorado, W 23-15
Oct. 7
Oct. 14
Oct. 21
Oct. 28
Sept. 2
Sept. 9
Sept. 16
Sept. 23
Sept. 30
Oct. 7
Oct. 14
Oct. 21
Oct. 28
Nov. 4
Nov. 11
Nov. 18
Aug. 25
Sept. 2
Sept. 9
Sept. 16
Sept. 23
Sept. 30
Oct. 7
Oct. 14
Oct. 21
Oct. 28
Nov. 4
Nov. 11
Nov. 18

Kansas State (7-2)

Iowa, W 27-7
Louisiana Tech, W 54-10
Ball State, W 76-0
North Texas, W 55-10
at Colorado, W 44-21
Oct. 7
Oct. 14
Oct. 21
Oct. 28
Nov. 4
Nov. 11
Nov. 18
Iowa State
Nebraska
at Missouri

Game 9

Kansas

NOV. 4



Location: Lawrence, Kan.

Enrollment: 26,297

1999 record: 5-7

Coach: Terry Allen, 4th

year

Series: Nebraska leads 82-21-3

2:30 p.m. (ABC),

Memorial Stadium, Lincoln, Neb.

Jayhawk to Watch

Senior quarterback Dylen Smith had a career-high 327 yards passing and rushed for three touchdowns in the Jayhawks' narrow loss to Texas Tech.

In just his second season after transferring from Santa Monica (Calif.) Community College, Smith

has passed for 3,164 yards, to rank sixth on KU's career charts. With his two touchdown passes against Tech, Smith passed Bobby Douglass to move into sixth place in career touchdown passes with 21.

Smith completed 23-of-40 passes against Tech, and the 327 yards was the eighth best single-game total in KU history.

Quick Facts

Kansas, which had consecutive wins over Missouri and Colorado, missed a chance to win three straight for the first time since 1995.

The Jayhawks held Tech to 80 yards rushing, marking the third consecutive game that KU has held its opponent to less than 100 yards.

Senior halfback David Winbush rushed 20 times for 120 yards against Tech, giving the Jayhawks their first 100-yard game this season.

On Deck

At Kansas State Nov. 11

Location: Manhattan, Kan.

Enrollment: 21,543

1999 record: 11-1

Coach: Bill Snyder, 12th year

Series: Nebraska leads 71-11-2



Time, TV TBA
KSU Stadium, Manhattan, Kan.

Tentative 2 Deeps

NEBRASKA OFFENSE

SE 3	Matt Davison***	6-1	185	Sr.
9	Wilson Thomas*	6-5	205	So.
LT 58	Dave Volk**	6-5	290	Jr.
66	Jon Rutherford**	6-3	300	Jr.
LG 77	Toniu Fonoti*	6-4	335	So.
68	Dan Waldrop	6-5	320	Fr.
C 54	Dominic Raiola*	6-2	300	Jr.
66	Jon Rutherford**	6-3	300	Jr.
RG 55	Russ Hochstein***	6-4	290	Sr.
50	Jon Dawson	6-2	280	Fr.
RT 65	Jason Schwab**	6-1	305	Sr.
66	Jon Rutherford**	6-3	300	Jr.
TE 87	Tracey Wistrom**	6-5	230	Jr.
99	Aaron Golliday*	6-4	285	So.
OB 7	Eric Crouch**	6-1	200	Jr.
10	Jammal Lord	6-2	210	Fr.
FB 15	Willie Miller***	6-1	245	Sr.
4	Judd Davies	6-0	240	Fr.
IB 38	Dan Alexander***	6-0	245	Sr.
and 36	Correll Buckhalter***	6-0	225	Sr.
WB 12	Bobby Newcombe**	6-0	200	Sr.
8	John Gibson**	6-0	195	Sr.
PK 26	Josh Brown*	6-2	190	So.

NEBRASKA DEFENSE

LR 57	Chris Kelsay*	6-5	255	So.
or 98	Demoine Adams*	6-2	235	So.
NT 70	Jason Lohr*	6-2	275	Jr.
85	Casey Nelson*	6-1	285	Jr.
DT 91	Loran Kaiser***	6-4	290	Sr.
or 56	Jeremy Slechta**	6-6	285	Jr.
RR 83	KyleVanden Bosch***	6-4	260	Sr.
95	J.P. Wichmann*	6-4	230	Jr.
SLB 43	Scott Shanle*	6-2	230	So.
41	Rod Baker*	6-0	225	Sr.
MLB 13	Carlos Polk***	6-2	260	Sr.
48	Jamie Burrow**	6-1	225	Jr.
WLB 34	Randy Stella*	6-0	200	Jr.
9	Mark Vedral**	6-1	205	Jr.
LCB 3	Keyuo Craver**	5-10	190	Jr.
28	Pat Ricketts	5-11	180	Fr.
FS 14	Dion Booker**	6-1	205	Jr.
or 42	Troy Watchorn**	5-11	195	Sr.
ROV 25	Joe Walker***	5-10	205	Sr.
or 19	Clint Finley***	6-0	205	Sr.
RCB 16	Ervin Swiney**	6-0	185	Jr.
or 5	DeJuan Groce*	5-10	190	So.
P 17	Dan Hadenfeldt*	5-11	195	Sr.

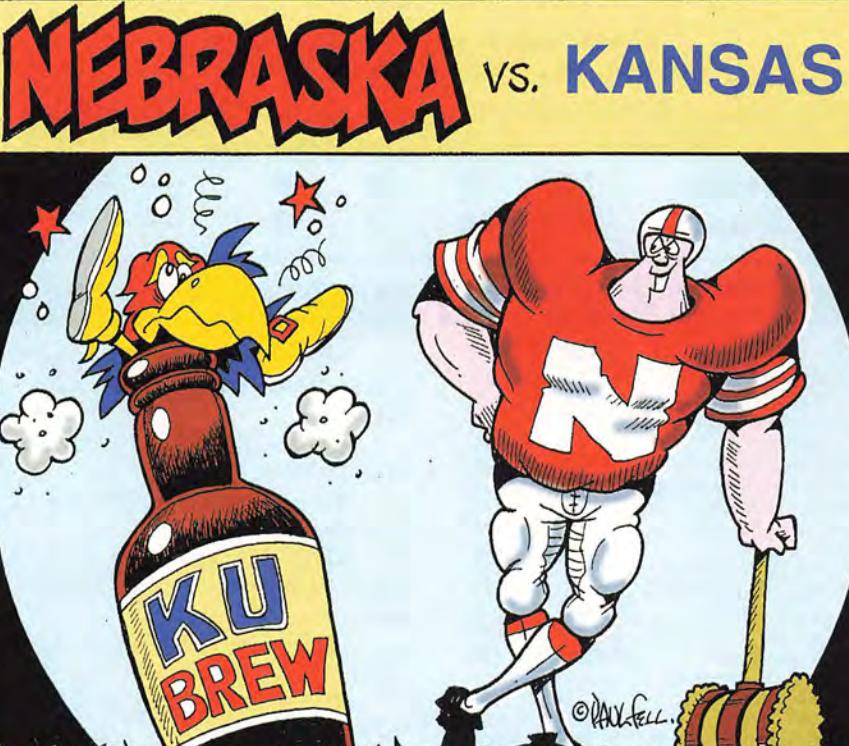
KANSAS OFFENSE

SE 1	Harrison Hill**	5-11	190	Jr.
12	Eric Patterson***	6-1	205	Sr.
LT 71	John Oddonetto*	6-5	290	Sr.
53	Bob Smith*	6-4	290	Jr.
LG 65	Kyle Grady*	6-4	295	So.
78	Chuck Jarvis***	6-3	310	Sr.
C 56	Bob Schmidt***	6-2	280	Sr.
60	Nick Smith*	6-4	285	So.
RG 66	Marc Owen***	6-3	305	Sr.
78	Chuck Jarvis***	6-3	310	Sr.
RT 75	Justin Hartwig**	6-4	305	Jr.
54	Adam Miller*	6-5	260	Jr.
TE 88	David Hurst*	6-3	260	So.
80	Jason Gulley**	6-3	270	Sr.
QB 4	Dyleen Smith*	6-1	195	Sr.
13	Zach Dyer	6-3	205	Fr.
HB 22	David Winbush***	5-7	180	Sr.
11	Reggie Duncan	5-9	220	Fr.
FB 33	Moran Norris***	6-2	250	Sr.
34	Mitchell Scott	6-3	235	Sr.
FL 9	Termaine Fulton**	5-10	188	Jr.
2	Byron Gassaway*	6-4	205	So.
PK 30	Joe Garcia***	5-11	185	Sr.

KANSAS DEFENSE

LE 95	Ervin Holloman	6-3	285	Jr.
63	Demond Benford	6-3	260	Jr.
NT 92	Nate Dwyer**	6-3	300	Jr.
91	Ryan Atkinson	6-2	295	Jr.
RE 94	De'Nard Whitfield	6-4	245	Jr.
96	John Culp	6-5	235	Jr.
OLB 97	Chaz Murphy*	6-4	252	Sr.
45	Victor bullock***	6-2	235	Sr.
ILB 16	Tim Bowers***	6-0	230	Sr.
51	Dariss Lomax**	6-2	235	Sr.
ILB 8	Marcus Rogers**	6-1	235	Jr.
90	Chris Doyle**	6-0	240	Sr.
OLB 98	Algie Atkinson**	6-5	240	Jr.
47	Glen Robinson	6-3	235	Fr.
LCB 24	Andrew Davison**	5-11	195	Jr.
3	Carl Ivey	5-11	180	Fr.
FS 5	Carl Nesmith*	6-3	215	Sr.
6	Bilal Cook**	5-11	190	Sr.
SS 27	Kareem High*	5-10	200	Sr.
25	Carl Shazor	6-3	200	So.
RCB 7	Quincy Roe**	5-9	185	Jr.
23	Matt Jordan*	5-10	190	So.
P 37	Joey Pefanio*	6-1	210	So.

THE PAUL FELL PREDICTION



NOV. 4, 2000

HUSKERS BOTTLE UP ANY JAYHAWK HOPES OF SPOILING N.U. HOMECOMING CELEBRATION!

PICKS

Brian Hill
Editor

It'll be interesting to see how Nebraska responds following the Oklahoma loss. The Huskers still have a lot to play for, and the Jayhawks may be down in the dumps as well after a disappointing loss to Texas Tech, in which they gave up 45 points at home. KU has many injuries, and this game is in Lincoln. **Nebraska 41, Kansas 17**

Mike Babcock
Contributing Editor

Kansas gave Nebraska a scare at Lawrence last season, and key players are back for the Jayhawks. Plus, the Cornhuskers expended considerable emotion in the Oklahoma game. The latter factor, in particular, could make this game closer than it might otherwise be. **Nebraska 31, Kansas 14**

KANSAS AT
NEBRASKA

Bob Schaller
Contributing Writer

Kansas knocked off Colorado this year and nearly did the same thing to the Huskers last year. This isn't last year. This isn't Colorado. And come to think about it, this game ain't in Kansas. There's too much to play for this time around for Nebraska. **Nebraska 34, Kansas 15**

Terry Douglass
Grand Island (Neb.)

Independent Sports Editor

Kansas developed some confidence against Nebraska last season, in its near miss of an upset in Lawrence. Also, this is a dangerous sandwich game for the Huskers, with Oklahoma in the rear view mirror and Kansas State on deck. Still, Nebraska is too motivated to slip. **Nebraska 45, Kansas 20**

BY THE NUMBERS

Nebraska vs. Oklahoma Oct. 28, 2000 • Norman, Okla.

Score By Quarters

Nebraska	14	0	0	0	—	14
Oklahoma	0	24	7	0	—	31

Team Stats

	NU	OU
First Downs	16	20
Rushing	10	5
Passing	6	12
Penalty	0	3
Rushing Attempts	43	35
Yards Gained Rushing	229	137
Yards Lost Rushing	34	19
Net Yards Rushing	195	118
Net Yards Passing	133	300
Passes Attempted	27	34
Passes Completed	125	20
Had Intercepted	1	1
Total Plays	70	69
Total Net Yards	328	418
Avg. Gain Per Play	4.7	6.1
Fumbles-Lost	2-1	0-0
Penalties-Yards	4-50	4-21
Punts-Yards	7-297	5-215
Avg. Per Punt	42.4	43.0
Punt Returns-Yards	1-2	4-40
Interceptions-Yards	1-0	1-32
Fumble Returns-Yards	0-0	0-0
Kickoff Returns-Yards	3-29	2-33
Possession Time	31:05	28:55

Scoring

NU — Matt Davison 39-yard pass from Eric Crouch (Josh Brown kick)
NU — Crouch 37-yard run (Brown kick)
OU — Quentin Griffin 1-yard run (Duncan kick)
OU — Curtis Fagan 34-yard pass from Josh Heupel (Duncan kick)
OU — Duncan 19-yard field goal
OU — Josh Norman 8-yard run (Duncan kick)
OU — Derrick Strait 32-yard interception return (Duncan kick)

Att. — 75,989

Temp. — 70

Individual Leaders

NEBRASKA

RUSHING

Name	Att.	Yds.	YPC	LNG	TD
Crouch, E.	24	103	4.3	37	1
Miller, W.	4	50	12.5	43	0
Alexander, D.	8	25	3.1	9	0
Buckhalter, C.	5	15	3.0	7	0
Newcombe, B.	2	2	1.0	8	0

PASSING

Name	C-A-I	Pct.	Yds.	TD
Crouch, E.	12-27-1	44.4	133	1

RECEIVING

Name	No.	Yds.	YPC	LNG	TD
Newcombe, B.	5	26	5.2	9	0
Davison, M.	4	79	19.8	39	1
Wistrom, T.	2	23	11.5	12	0
Gibson, J.	1	5	5.0	5	0

PUNTING

Name	No.	Yds.	Avg.	LNG
Hadenfeldt, D.	6	297	49.5	62

PUNT RETURNS

Name	No.	Yds.	YPR	LNG	TD
Newcombe, B.	1	2	2.0	2	0

KICKOFF RETURNS

Name	No.	Yds.	YPR	LNG	TD
Walker, J.	2	24	12.0	13	0
Davies, J.	1	5	5.0	5	0

DEFENSE

Name	UT	AT	TT	FL	Int.	Sacks
Stella, R.	5	5	10	2-2	0	1-1
Polk, C.	4	5	9	2-2	0	0
Groce, D.	6	6	6	0	0	0
Lohr, J.	4	2	6	1-3	0	0
Swiney, E.	5	0	5	0	0	0
Craver, K.	2	3	5	1-2	0	0
Watchorn, T.	3	1	4	1-1	0	0
Vedral, M.	1	2	3	0	0	0
Vanden Bosch, K.	1	2	3	1-8	0	1-8
Walker, J.	1	2	3	1-1	0	0
Kelsay, C.	1	1	2	0	0	0
Burrow, J.	1	1	2	1-1	0	0
Ricketts, P.	1	1	2	0	0	0
Booker, D.	0	2	2	1-2	0	0
Slechta, J.	0	2	2	0	0	0
Smith, J.	1	0	1	0	0	0
Amos, W.	1	0	1	0	0	0
Shanle, S.	1	0	1	0	0	0
Adams, D.	0	1	1	0	0	0
Clanton, J.	0	1	1	0	0	0
Wichmann, J.P.	0	1	1	0	0	0
Penny, J.	0	1	1	0	0	0

OKLAHOMA

RUSHING

Name	Att.	Yds.	YPC	LNG	TD
Griffin, Q.	21	52	2.5	9	1
Heupel, J.	8	46	5.8	21	0
Savage, A.	1	13	13.0	13	0
Norman, J.	1	8	8.0	8	1
Littrell, S.	1	1	1.0	1	0
Mackey, D.	1	1	1.0	1	0
Team	1	-1	-1.0	0	0
Fagan, C.	1	-2	-2.0	0	0

PASSING

Name	C-A-I	Pct.	Yds.	TD
Heupel, J.	20-34-1	58.8	300	1

RECEIVING

Name	No.	Yds.	YPC	LNG	TD
Fagan, C.	6	95	15.8	34	1
Woolfolk, A.	5	66	13.2	34	0
Savage, A.	3	58	19.4	37	0
Griffin, Q.	2	2	-1.0	0	0
Norman, J.	1	45	45.0	45	0
Littrell, S.	1	16	16.0	16	0
Works, R.	0	6	0.0	6	0

PUNTING

Name	No.	Yds.	Avg.	LNG
Ferguson, J.	5	215	43.0	54

PUNT RETURNS

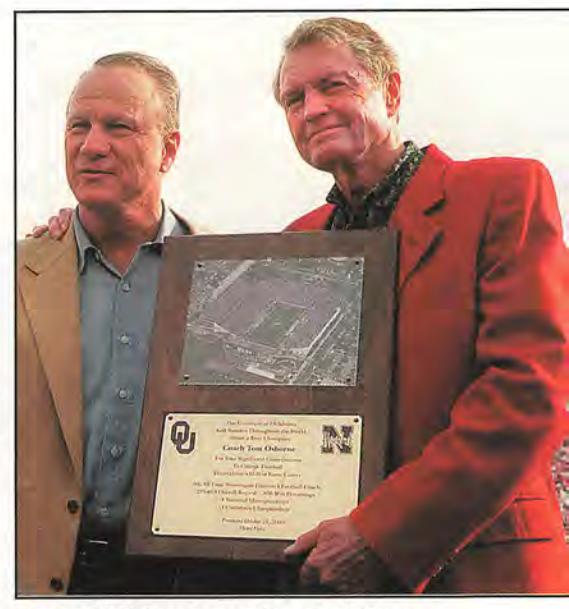
Name	No.	Yds.	YPR	LNG	TD
Thatcher, J.T.	3	21	7.0	14	0
Norman, J.	1	10	10.0	10	0
Woolfolk, A.	1	9	9.0	9	0

KICKOFF RETURNS

Name	No.	Yds.	YPR	LNG	TD
Savage, A.	2	33	16.5	18	0

DEFENSIVE LEADERS

Name	UT	AT	TT	FL	Int.	Sacks
Calmus, R.	6	10	16	0	0	0
Marshall, T.	8	4	12	3-19	0	2-17
Williams, R.	4	6	10	2-8	0	0
Everage, B.	2	5	7	0	0	0
Steffen, R.	5	1	6	0	0	0
Thompson, M.	5	1	6	1-1	0	0
Wilson-Guest, J.	2	1	3	0	0	0
Thatcher, J.T.	2	1	3	0	0	0
Strait, D.	2	1	3	0	1-32	0
Heinecke, C.	2	0	2	1-6	0	0
Jones, O.	2	0	2	0	0	0
Wilkerison, J.	1	1	2	0	0	0
Callens, C.	0	2	2	0	0	0
Richardson, R.	1	0	1	0	0	0
Norman, J.	1	0	1	0	0	0



Former Oklahoma coach Barry Switzer (left) presented an award to former Nebraska coach Tom Osborne.

'00 SEASON STATS

RUSHING LEADERS

Name	G	Att.	Yds.	YPG	TD
Alexander, D.	8	132	805	100.6	6
Crouch, E.	8	112	679	84.9	12
Buckhalter, C.	8	78	570	71.2	6
Miller, W.	8	35	193	24.1	2
Diedrick, D.	8	25	179	22.4	3
Davies, J.	8	13	179	19.9	0
Lord, J.	5	22	103	20.6	3
Grixby, D.	6	10	61	7.6	0
Collins, T.	2	7	29	14.5	0
Kastl, P.	5	6	26	5.2	0
Miller, R.	3	4	18	6.0	0
Newcombe, B.	8	9	18	2.2	0
Chrisman, J.	3	5	8	2.7	0

PASSING

Name	G	C-A-I	Pct.	Yds.	TD
Crouch, E.	8	59-123-6	48.0	908	10
Lord, J.	5	5-11-1	45.5	62	0

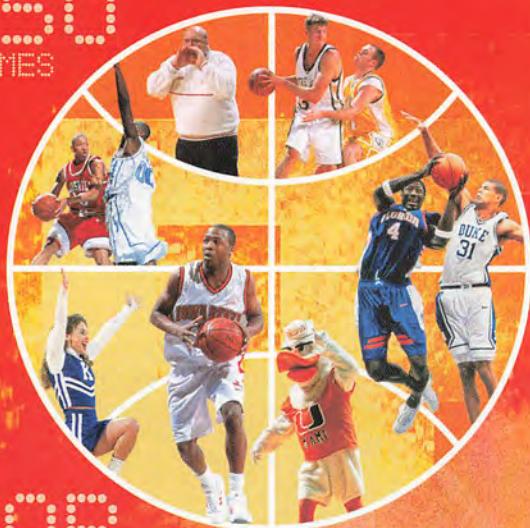
RECEIVING

Name	G	No.	Yds.	YPC	YPG	TD
Davison, M.	8	17	332	19.5	41.5	3
Wistrom, T.	8	16	270	16.9	33.8	4
Newcombe, B.	8	16	202	12.6	35.2	0
Gibson, J.	8	4	14	3.5	1.8	1
Buckhalter, C.	8	3	68	22.7	8.5	1
Bowling, J.						

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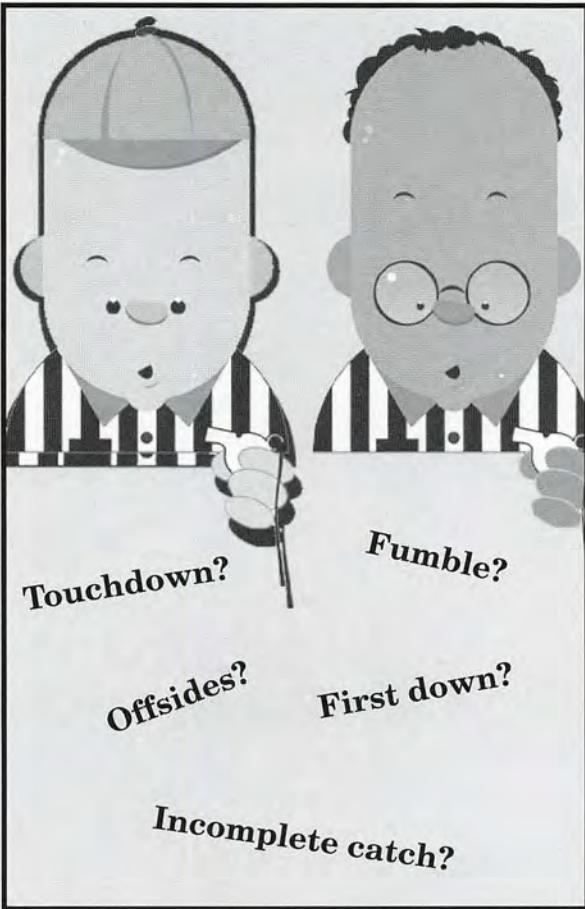
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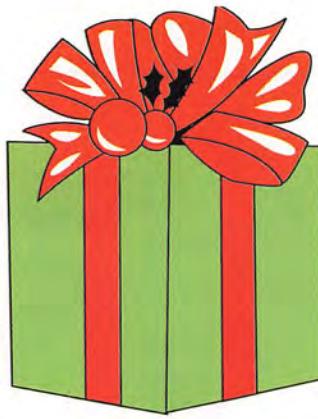
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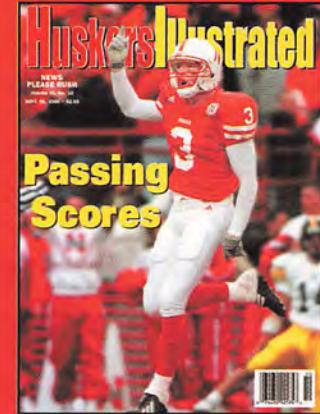
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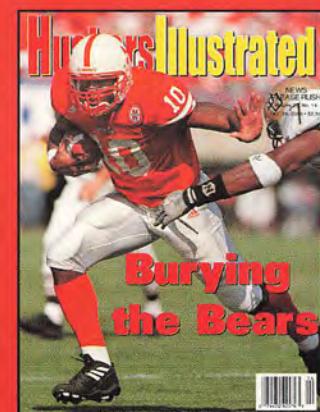
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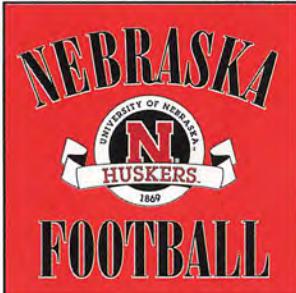
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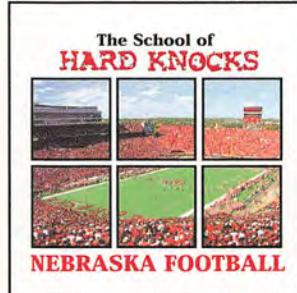
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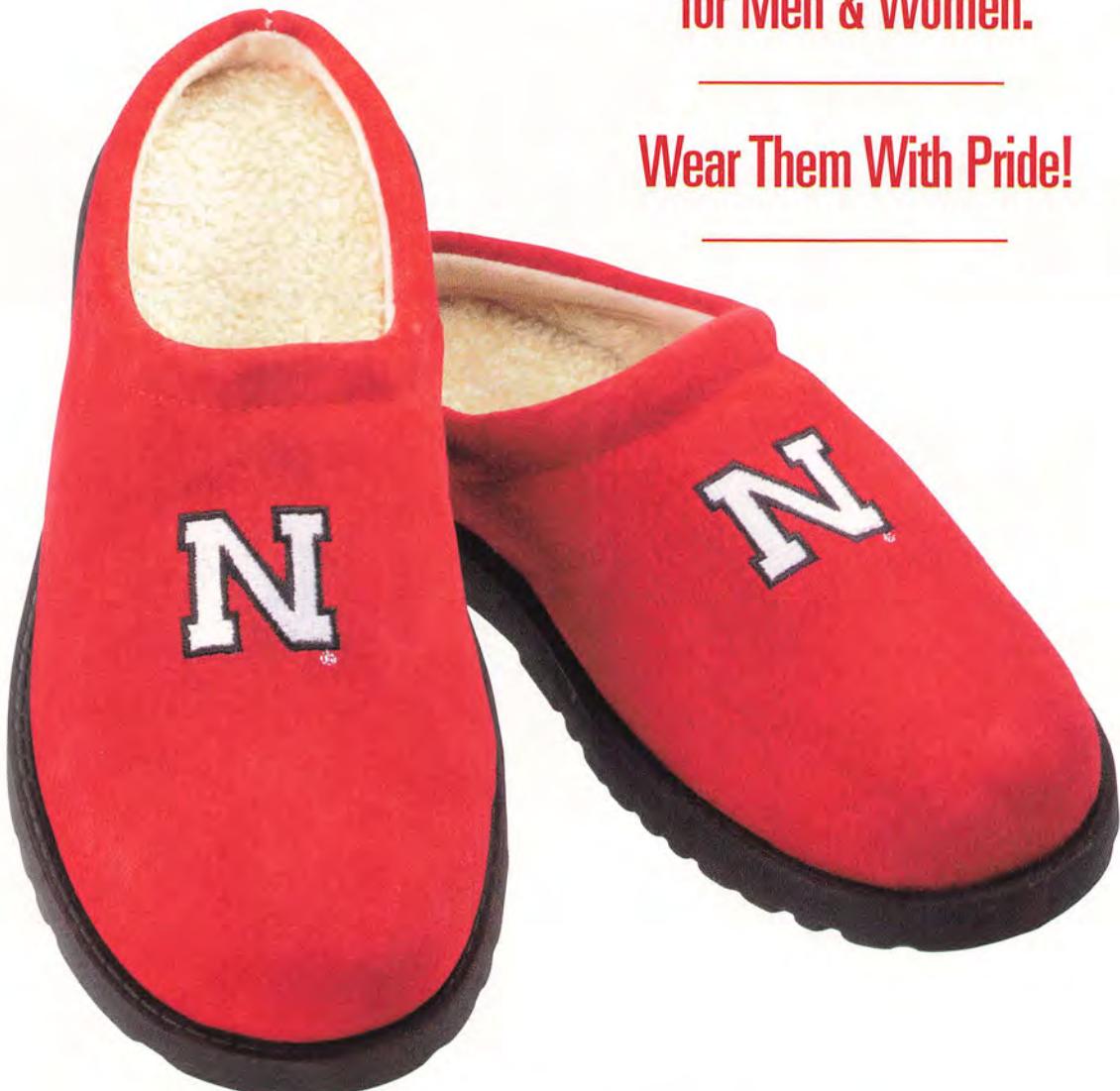
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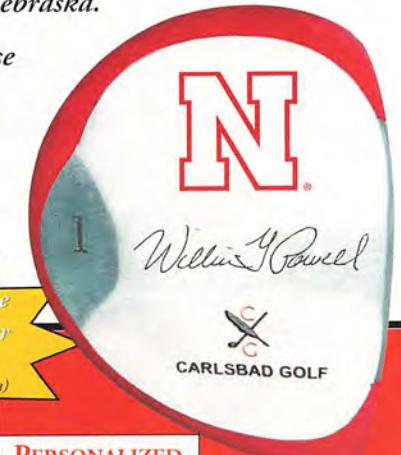
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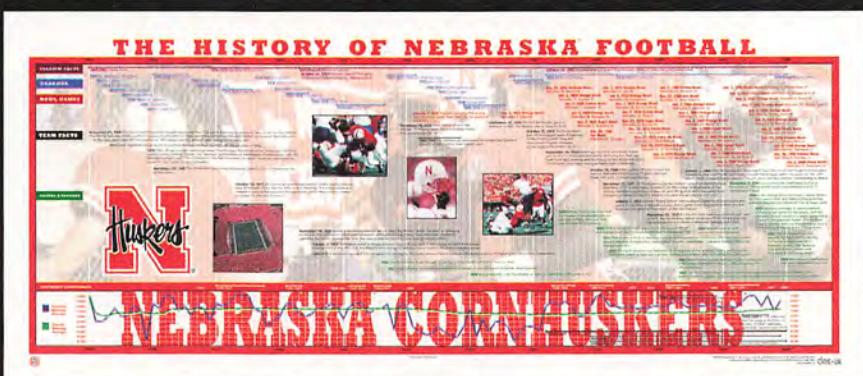
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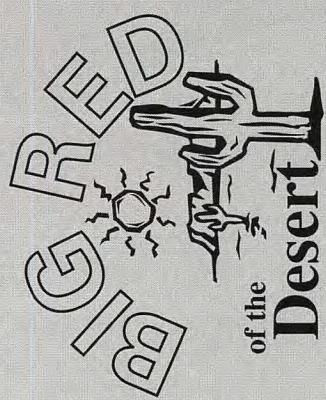
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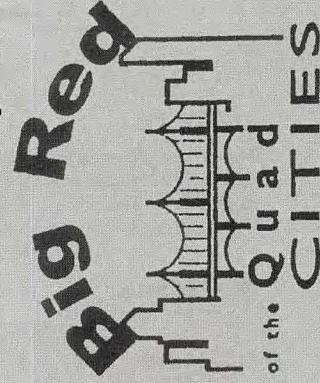
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SIDE OUT

Husker Soph Climbs to Top

*Holmquist fulfilling
expectations in her
second season*

By Todd Henrichs

It's a big climb from the basement locker room to the brightly lit volleyball court at the Nebraska Coliseum.

Amber Holmquist remembers the first time she walked up those two flights of stairs for practice. A freshman stepping into Nebraska's nationally prominent program, Holmquist faced a difficult climb a year ago.

Even the best high school players in the nation are challenged walking into the collegiate game for the first time. Holmquist's talent was evident from the very first workout, but it was clear she wasn't ready to play.

For Nebraska fans, Holmquist's arrival was worth the wait.

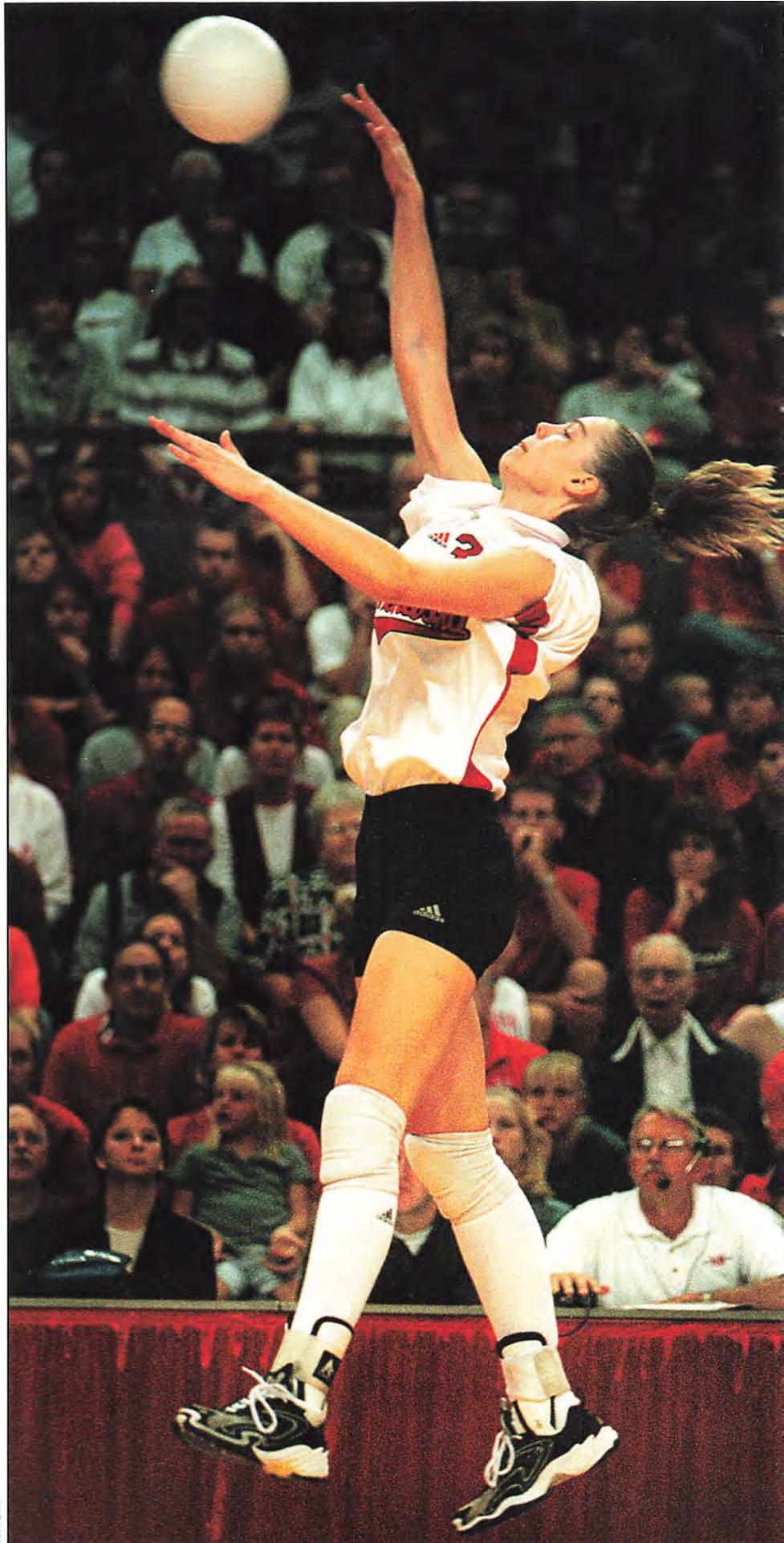
Now a sophomore, Holmquist is compiling numbers that could garner All-American honors this season. She's among the national leaders in hitting efficiency and blocking and ranked second among Huskers in kills per game.

With Nancy Meendering sitting out a redshirt season, it's the kind of performance Coach John Cook believed Nebraska would need to contend this year. The Huskers were unbeaten and top-ranked through the first half of Big 12 Conference play.

"We've asked (Amber) to become a

Scott Bruhn

Amber Holmquist's 6-foot-4 frame and her athletic ability were tailored perfectly for the Husker system.



dominant middle blocker," Cook said. "Because of where she plays next to the setter, we only have two hitters in the front row two of those rotations, and so we have to be able to force her the ball more."

"That's a mentality that great middles have, that they're going to get into position, especially in transition where our setter can get the ball to them, and they can make something happen. She is developing in that, and she is putting up some great numbers."

A member of the U.S. Junior National Team, Holmquist already had international experience before arriving at NU a year ago. Her 6-foot-4 frame and athletic ability were tailored perfectly for the Huskers' system.

Yet NU coaches waited for Holmquist to tell them when she was ready. Somewhat soft-spoken, it's not a surprise Holmquist let her actions speak louder than words.

"I went hard in practice every day, and when they saw that they knew I was ready," Holmquist recalled. "I was gaining confidence at the same time, so when they saw that I was ready, they had confidence in me, and I also had confidence in myself."

"I wasn't really expecting to start my freshman year, but coming in, everybody made me feel so confident out there. I wouldn't say I was surprised, but I was really excited and happy with what happened last year."

After playing in just five of NU's first 13 matches, Holmquist took the starting spot held by Tonia Tauke.

Initially, some NU followers questioned the move. Tauke was a fan favorite who started for three seasons and who played extensively even in her freshman year.

But Holmquist answered the critics, as NU won 15 of its final 16 matches. She led the conference in hitting percentage as a freshman and ranked second in blocks.

Coaches voted Holmquist to the preseason all-conference team this year.

"She played a big part last year," Cook said. "She played really well, and that's when our team was hot, and we made that nice run in the second half of the Big 12."

Nebraska's late-season performance carried over to this season, along with its winning streak in conference play. The Huskers won their 21st match in a row over a Big 12 opponent by defeating Texas in Austin earlier this season.

Holmquist has played some of her best matches against Texas-based schools. A prep standout from the Houston area, Holmquist chose

Nebraska out of high school and has never regretted the decision.

Not even when Nebraska suffered tough losses at Texas and Texas A&M a year ago. Holmquist played extensively in both matches and vowed they wouldn't happen again.

That level of commitment is a common thread among the Huskers this season.

"We hold each other accountable," Holmquist said. "I'm not saying we didn't last year, but it's really evident out there on the court. If you make a mistake out there, you're expected to improve."

Holmquist has continued to improve in her second season as a Husker. She ranked as the seventh most-efficient hitter nationally after an

outstanding six-match stretch in which the sophomore averaged better than 11 kills while hitting .522, .667, .750, .500, .500 and .688.

Anything over .400 is considered exceptional. At midseason, Holmquist's overall hitting percentage was .432.

Holmquist tracks her individual goals, including blocking numbers that are also among the best in the nation this season. But the team's performance is most significant.

All the Huskers climb those same steps every day aiming for the top.

"Our team goal is to win the national championship," Holmquist said. "Coming into the season I knew I had to step up; everybody had to step up their games to reach that goal." ■



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NU Linebackers Need Versatility

Huskers seek players with speed, size, athletic ability

By James Hale

There are so many intangibles with the success of the Nebraska Blackshirts that it seems unfair to pinpoint just one. Each component of the defense seems to be a dominating part, which in effect, makes the unit one of the very best in the country every year.

In recent years, however, the Nebraska linebackers have been one-of-a-kind types of players. The

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Jared Helming	Springfield (Kickapoo), Mo.	6-4	270	DT
Richie Incognito	Glendale (Mountain View), Ariz.	6-4	285	OL
Mike McLaughlin	Omaha (Millard North), Neb.	6-1	175	QB
Gary Pike	Pueblo (Centennial), Colo.	6-5	275	OL
Cory Ross	Denver (Thomas Jefferson), Colo.	5-9	182	DB/WR
Barrett Ruud	Lincoln (Southeast), Neb.	6-2	220	LB
Dan Stevenson	Barrington, Ill.	6-6	305	OL
Mike Stuntz	Council Bluffs (St. Albert), Iowa	6-2	180	QB

Cornhusker backers are physical, fast, quick defenders who can strike from anywhere on the field. They are blessed with great range and versatility and many times are the best pure athletes on the field.

Sometimes they come to Nebraska

as a big safety and are built into a linebacker, or many times the Husker coaching staff finds its prototype playing prep football. Only the unique and the gifted can be a Nebraska linebacker, and only the most talented are recruited by the Huskers.

That's why it's not surprising that Jeb Huckeba (6-foot-5, 201 pounds with 4.47 speed in the 40-yard dash) of Searcy, Ark., is at the top of the Nebraska recruiting board. Athletes with this kind of size and athletic ability just don't come along very often. How many linebackers do you know who can catch 44 passes for 864 yards and 17 touchdowns. He did that last season, despite missing five games with a severe ankle injury.

The fact that Huckeba doubles as a wide receiver at pass-happy Searcy makes him that much more attractive to the Huskers and Arkansas who he has already visited. Huckeba attended summer camps at Nebraska, Arkansas and Ole Miss and was timed at 4.47 at Ole Miss and 4.49 at Nebraska.

"Speed is what really makes Jeb an outstanding player," said his father, Ronnie, who is also the defensive coordinator at Harding College. "Jeb was born with great coordination for his size, and he usually is the fastest player on the field. It's really a gift, and he can exploit that gift as well as any player I have ever seen."

"Jeb is unique to watch, because on defense, he is a heat seeking missile running down ball carriers all over the field, and then he turns right around on offense and outruns defensive backs on a slant pattern."

HUSKER RECRUITING

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Impressive Wins Boost Sooners

Jeb had more than 140 tackles as a junior and through six games this season had 90 stops, eight tackles for losses, five sacks, five caused fumbles and four fumble recoveries. On offense, Huckeba has four games with more than 100 yards of receptions and had one game where he caught eight passes for 263 yards.

The wild card in Huckeba's recruiting is that he may go with his father to Harding.

"Jeb is pretty wide open now, and he was very impressed with both Nebraska and Arkansas," said Coach Huckeba. "Jeb has an interest in Harding, not just because I coach there, but also because he has been raised in a strong Christian background, and his Christianity is very important to him. The school is not Division I, but it has a strong spiritual background, which Jeb is interested in. Thank goodness Jeb has a choice and really can't go wrong with his decision."

Lamarus Rowell (6-3, 212, 4.67) of Opelika, Ala., is another top ten linebacker who has an interest in Nebraska football.

"I am trying to stay open right now, but there is no question that I am going to visit Nebraska," Rowell said. "They have a great tradition and are known for their football team. I like how aggressive they are on defense. It would be a great privilege to play for Nebraska."

Rowell went to the Auburn, Alabama and LSU camps. Florida State, Tennessee, South Carolina and Clemson are also involved in his recruiting. Rowell totaled 147 tackles a year ago and through Opelika's 7-0 start this season, he has 93 stops, three sacks, two interceptions and one blocked punt, which he ran back for a touchdown.

Corey Mayes (6-1, 235, 4.6) of Chicago (Morgan Park) has played defensive end the last two years, after starting as a sophomore at outside linebacker. He is being recruited as an outside linebacker and is also an outstanding blocking fullback.

Mayes grabbed everybody's attention a year ago when he registered 85 tackles, 14 sacks, 10 tackles for losses and three fumble recoveries. He is on track to better those stats this year, with 125 tackles and three sacks through eight games.

The world is recruiting Mays, but he has narrowed his choices down to Notre Dame, Michigan State, Purdue, Boston College, Nebraska and Miami.

"I am pretty open right now and trying to stay that way until after the season is over," Mays said. "Nebraska is a great football program, and they want to see my film. I know they are a dominating football team. I am looking for

Oklahoma recent victories over Texas and Kansas State has propelled the Sooners into the top three of the national polls and has given the Sooners a boost on the recruiting trail as well.

Tight end Chris Bush (6-foot-5, 235 pounds, 4.8 in the 40-yard dash) of Channelview, Texas, picked the Sooners over Georgia Tech and Indiana. OU's recent success was the deciding factor for Bush.

"The best thing about Oklahoma is that they are 6-0 and ripping people," Bush said. "I have been leaning to them the whole time, but I didn't see any reason to wait any longer, with they way they are playing."

Linebacker Fred Fleeks (6-1, 210, 4.5) of Navasota, Texas, chose the Sooners over Texas, Texas A&M and Texas Tech. Fleeks made 147 tackles as a junior and is one of the fastest linebackers in Texas. The Sooners now have seven oral commitments and expected to pick up No. 8 from All-America running back Seymore Shaw of Shawnee, Okla.

— Texas is close to being full, with 19 commitments toward its 2001 class. Defensive end Eric Hall (6-3, 230, 4.6) of Clarksville, Tenn., picked the Longhorns over Florida State, Nebraska, Tennessee, LSU and Texas A&M. Hall plays quarterback and defensive back at Clarksville but will take his outstanding athletic ability to defensive end at Texas.

The Longhorns also took care of their punting problems for next year by getting a commitment from Brian Bradford (6-2, 210) of Trinity Valley (Texas) Community College. The Longhorns have struggled in the punting game all year, but Bradford should take care of that, as he averages 43 yards per punt.

"Brian has been our most valuable player all year," Trinity Valley Coach Chuck Langston said. "He is the type of punter that can control field position for you, and he been a big weapon for us. He will do a great job at Texas."

— Linebacker Matt Butler (6-2, 210, 4.6) of Manhattan, Kansas, decided to stay home and play for Kansas State. Butler is ranked as the top linebacker in Kansas and was also recruited by Kansas, Iowa, Iowa State and Colorado State. ■

a solid football program, with strong academics. I went to Purdue this past weekend and loved the atmosphere there. I go next to Notre Dame and then to Michigan State. I will probably go to Nebraska in January."

Kevin Simon (5-11, 215, 4.42) of Concord (De La Salle), Calif., is finally out of the shadow of former celebrated teammate D.J. Williams, but don't be surprised if he doesn't follow him to Miami. Williams shocked the nation a year ago when he traveled cross-country to play for the Canes.

Simon, rated as one of the top ten linebackers in the country, has visits set to Miami and Texas A&M. For his next three visits Simon is considering Florida State, Nebraska, Michigan, USC, UCLA, Tennessee and Notre Dame.

"I have been working to get my choices down to five schools, but that hasn't been easy," Simon said. "I have two visits set up, and I would say Nebraska and Florida State will be at least two others, but I am not sure at

this time."

Nebraska may be going back to Hawaii for another outstanding talent. Ikiaka Curnan (5-11, 230, 4.5) of Honolulu (St. Louis) is a talented athlete who is hard to track because of where he plays. However, Curnan is no secret to those who follow recruiting. Granted he doesn't have the height that recruiters look for, but he does have speed and athletic ability. Nebraska is in the chase, along with Arizona and Hawaii.

Jerry Hamilton (6-0, 205, 4.4) of Rustin, La., is a blazer who could also be a strong safety. However, he plays linebacker at Rustin and makes plays all over the field. As a junior, Hamilton was in on 110 tackles and 10 sacks and expects to better those totals this season.

Hamilton has Arkansas and Nebraska as his top two schools, with a visit also set to Texas A&M).

Nebraska has a commitment from Barrett Ruud (6-2, 220, 4.6) of Lincoln (Southeast), Neb.. ■

CROSSWORD

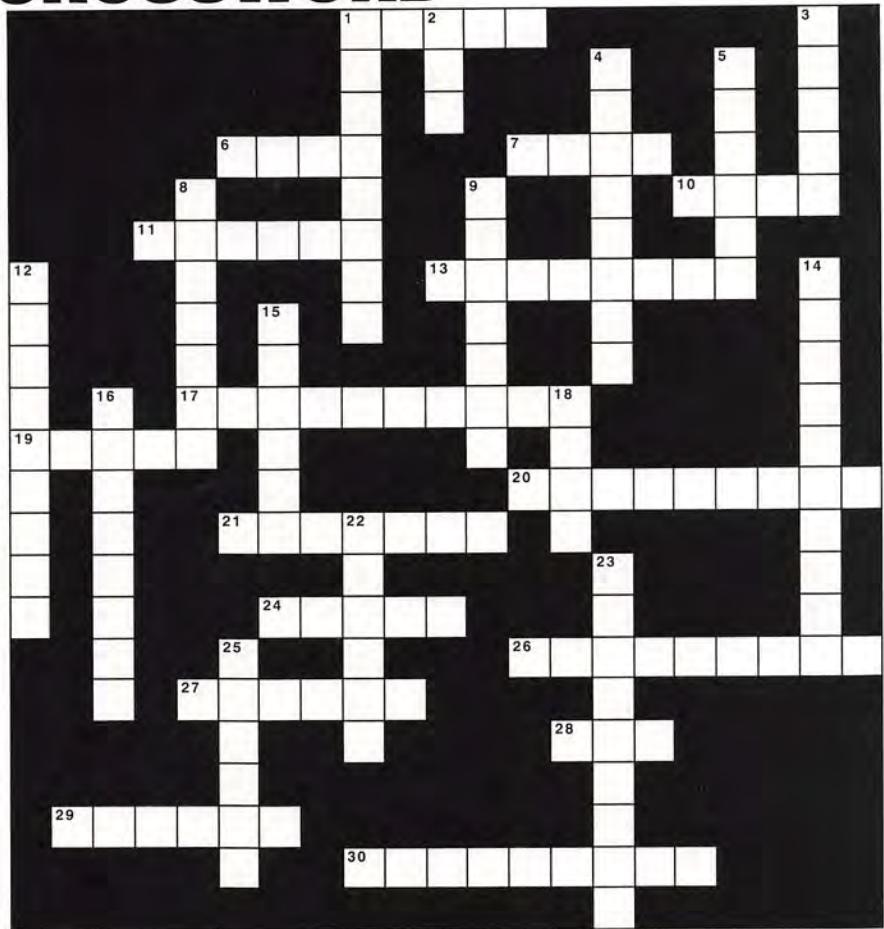
ACROSS

- NU color commentator
- NU defensive coordinator
- NU's leading tackler
- NU national championships
- NU's No. 54
- Kansas nickname
- Stadium of national championship game
- NU play-by-play announcer
- Stadium for Big 12 title game
- Kansas color
- Kansas head coach
- Memorial Stadium playing surface
- NU rush end coach
- Frank Solich's wife
- K-State coach
- NU's No. 55 (offense)

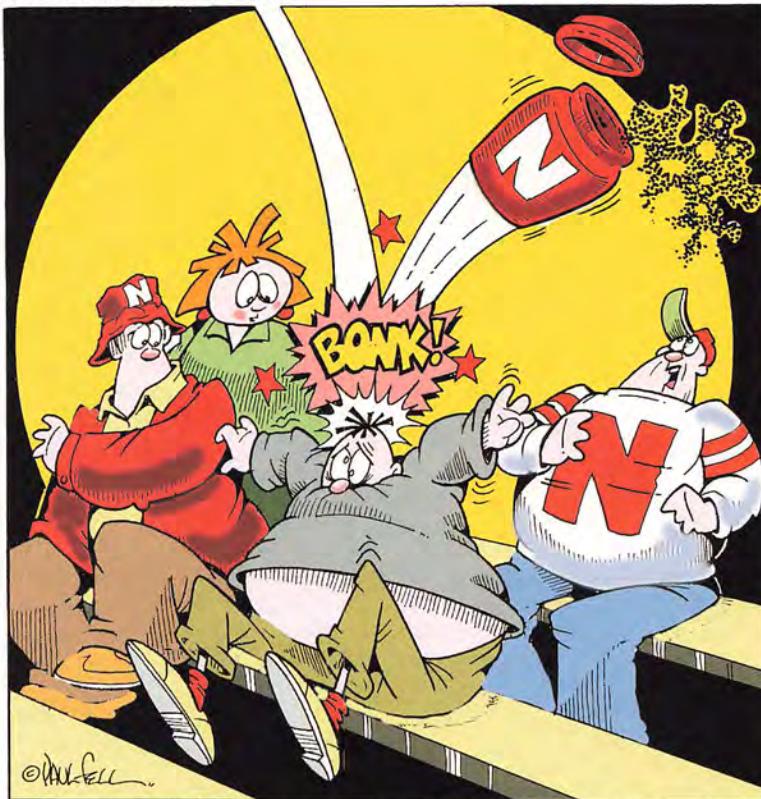
DOWN

- Frank Solich's college position
- Network televising NU vs. KU
- NU national championships in 90s
- Nov. 24 opponent
- NU's No. 4 (offense)
- NU's No. 2 all-time receiver
- NU's No. 55 (defense)
- 2001 opener
- NU's No. 36
- Blocked punt vs. Baylor
- U of Kansas location
- NU's backup QB
- NU's No. 15
- Leading rusher vs. Baylor
- Defensive tackle slowed by foot injury

Answers in Nov. 11 issue



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Will They Meet Again?

Solich says Huskers 'a long way from meeting anybody in the championship game'



Mike Babcock

NEBRASKA AND OKLAHOMA could meet in a rematch in the Big 12 Championship game at Arrowhead Stadium in Kansas City on the night of Dec. 2. That's a definite possibility.

But Coach Frank Solich wouldn't be drawn into such speculation.

"We're a long way off from meeting anybody in the championship game in Kansas City," he said following the Cornhuskers' 31-14 loss at resurgent Oklahoma.

Kansas is next on the schedule, and the Jayhawks will get Nebraska's full attention.

"We'll need to just make sure we regroup," Solich said.

The Cornhuskers have three regular-season games remaining and find themselves in a battle to represent the Big 12's north division in the conference play-off.

That despite the fact Kansas State suffered its second conference loss at Texas A&M. And theoretically, Iowa State is still in the picture with only two conference losses.

Imagining the Cyclones in Kansas City is a bit of a stretch. It's probably going to come down to the Nebraska-Kansas State game in Manhattan on Nov. 11. But you never know.

Nebraska can't afford another letdown comparable to the one that occurred in Norman.

"This was the most prepared we've been for a game all this year," rush end Kyle Vanden Bosch said. "The attitude was there. The preparation was there. The coaches did a great job during the week, getting us ready for this game. Then we didn't execute very well in the first half."

More correctly, the Cornhuskers didn't execute very well in the second quarter. Take away those 15 minutes, and Nebraska could have remained atop the Bowl Championship Series rankings.

And if it had remained atop those rankings, it would be on track to play for the national championship on Jan. 3 in the Orange Bowl game. Still, getting to Miami remains a possibility.

"There's a lot out there," Solich said. "They (the Sooners) know that. We know that. And everybody in our conference knows that. But the possibilities will only be there if we play our best football."

"And the way to play our best football is to go back to work and not dwell on this loss."

Quarterback Eric Crouch compared the Oklahoma loss to last season's 31-21 loss at Texas in late October. Nebraska regrouped and finished with a six-game winning streak.

Included in that winning streak was an impressive 22-6 victory against the Longhorns in a rematch in the Big 12

championship game and a 31-21 victory against Tennessee in the Fiesta Bowl.

After dropping to an eighth-place tie in the Associated Press poll following the Texas loss, the Cornhuskers worked their way back to third in the final rankings.

And many thought they were the nation's best team at season's end.

"We'll bounce back. We'll put this one behind us and have a great year like we did last year," said Crouch. "That's what we have in mind. I have confidence in this team."

"We want to get better than this, and I think that's what our approach is going to be."

Nebraska wasn't the only unbeaten team to lose Saturday. Clemson, which had been seventh in the BCS standings, was upset at home by Georgia Tech, leaving only Oklahoma, Virginia Tech and Texas Christian with unblemished records. TCU was 13th out of 15 in the standings.

The Cornhuskers no longer control their own destiny. But they're not out of the hunt just yet.

"As far as the big picture, maybe the national title's there, maybe it's not. We're not too worried about that right now," Vanden Bosch said. "We just have to take it one game at a time from here."

"We just have to kind of re-evaluate ourselves and improve. We had shown improvement the couple of weeks before. But today I think we may have taken a little step back, especially on defense."

The Cornhuskers had allowed only three points combined in victories against Texas Tech and Baylor.

Oklahoma, which was almost certain to move up to No. 1 in the polls on the heels of its victory against Nebraska, is obviously in the driver's seat to represent the Big 12 south in Kansas City.

The Sooners' biggest remaining test probably will come at Texas A&M on Nov. 11.

About the only certainty right now is, "we will not have an undefeated team," said Solich. "But yet, we want this season to be as good of a season as we possibly can have."

"We will move forward with that in mind and go back to work come Monday."

And as was the case a year ago, after the Texas loss, Nebraska plays Kansas next.

"We need to respond to this. We need to bounce back, certainly," Solich said.

"It's a blow to any chances for any kind of a championship when you have a loss. No one is out of anything yet. It's still a season that has to be played out. But we need to get ready to play Kansas."

"We're not looking at implications as to how this (loss) affects us down the road." ■



Rush end Kyle Vanden Bosch says the Huskers were well prepared.



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